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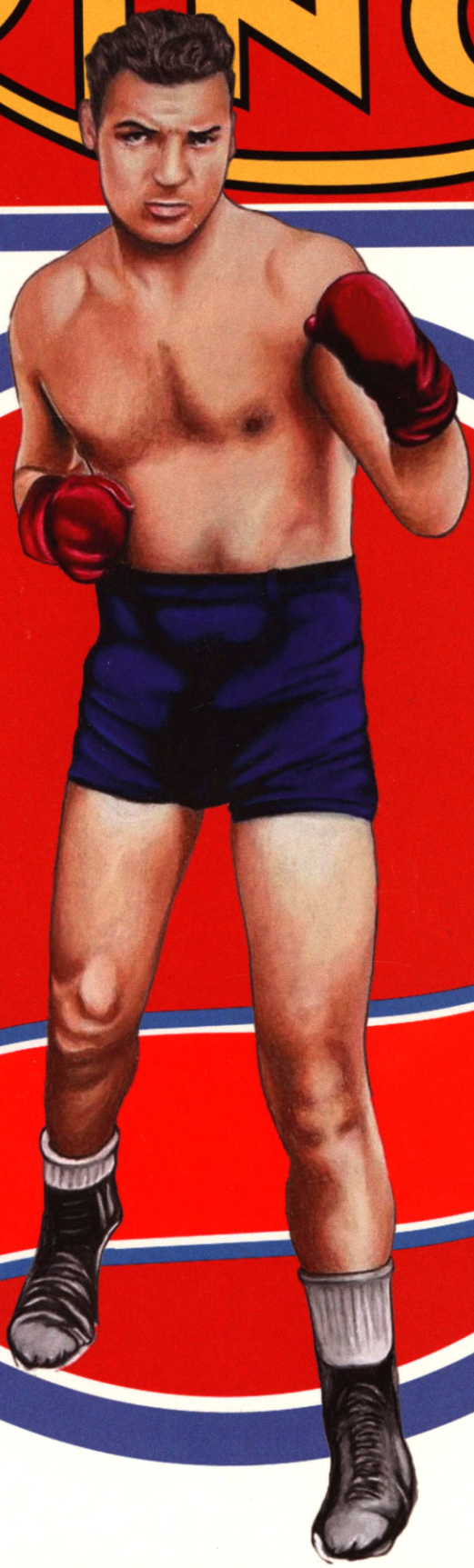

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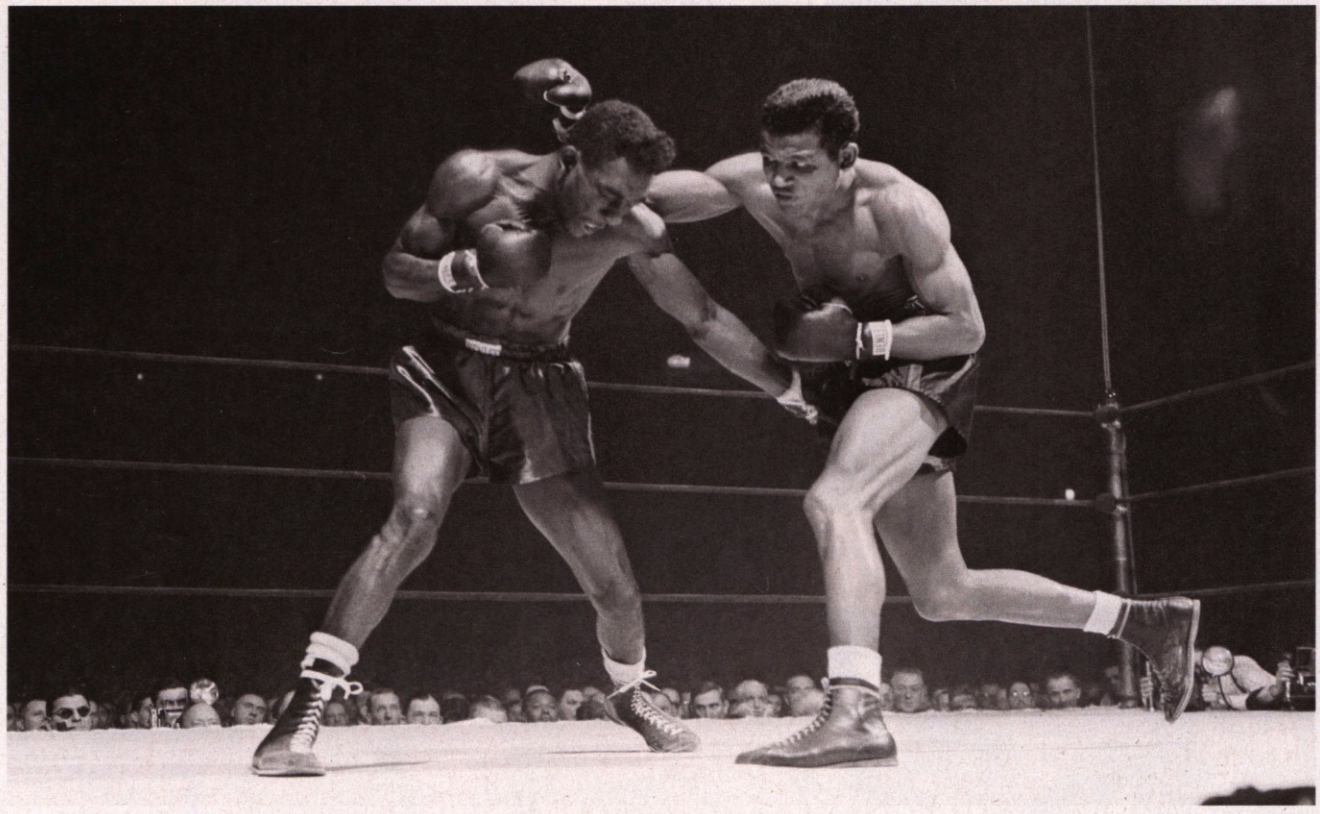

24 THE JOURNEY OF A CENTURY
A PICTORIAL PANORAMA OF BOXING FROM THE 1920S TO THE PRESENT
By Doug Fischer

46 HOLDING THE LINE
THE RING'S CURRENT CHAMPIONS GUARD A 100-YEAR-OLD TRADITION
By Brian Harty

58 THE LOST CHAMPIONS
A DECADE-LONG LAPSE LEFT MANY DESERVING FIGHTERS WITHOUT A BELT
By Cliff Rold

64 ON THE CANVAS
A LOOK INSIDE COLLECTOR INGO WEGERICH'S EXHIBITION OF BOXING-RELATED ART
By Tom Gray

72 GREATEST HITS: MICHAEL SPINKS
A CHAMPION IN TWO DIVISIONS, "JINX" SHINED IN ONE OF BOXING'S GOLDEN ERAS
By Anson Wainwright

78 NEW KING IN TOWN
USYK-JOSHUA 2 FIGHT REPORT
By Tris Dixon

80 SERIAL THRILLER
TYSON FURY EXPLAINS WHY HE JUST CAN'T STAY AWAY FROM BOXING
By Tom Gray

86 THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
PRIZEFIGHTERS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A KNACK FOR TRANSITIONING FROM RING TO SCREEN
By Christina Newland

92 THE BIRTH OF A PROMOTER
FOR MANY YEARS, KATHY DUVA DIDN'T KNOW THE STORY OF WHERE SHE CAME FROM
By Joseph Santoliquito

98 JOE LOUIS VS. MIKE TYSON
A FANTASY FIGHT FOR THE UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP
By Ron Lipton

DEPARTMENTS

2 OPENING SHOT
4 COME OUT WRITING
7 RINGSIDE By Doug Fischer
10 NEW FACES By Anson Wainwright
12 FIGHTER OF THE MONTH
14 JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES By Thomas Hauser
18 RING RATINGS PACKAGE
110 FROM THE ARCHIVES
112 COMING UP

Sugar Ray Robinson (right), a star during the 1940s and 1950s, battles Tommy Bell during their 1946 welterweight title bout.

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY JIOVANNY LOPEZ, INSTAGRAM @DESIGNEDBYJIO

Despite being over the 130-pound limit, Shakur Stevenson was a runaway points winner over Robson Conceicao and now looks set to take on the world's best lightweights.

MIKE STOBE/STRINGER

IT WAS OK

I found Canelo-Golovkin 3 mildly entertaining as a display of boxing IQ. I thought Canelo won about eight rounds. GGG's jab was impressive, but you can see he is half of what he once was in terms of activity and perhaps power, too. Canelo also seemed to be slowing down a little. Not sure if you agree on that? I think Canelo should stay at 168. There are a lot of good challenges such as Benavidez, Andrade, etc. If he goes back up to light heavyweight, Bivol beats him again and Artur Beterbiev knocks him out for sure.

My question for you is what do you think would have happened had this fight been a 15-rounder? It seems GGG was beginning to find his rhythm and the last four rounds were getting real interesting.

Aaron
Miami

Some fans had Canelo-Golovkin 3 closer than others.

Once again, I saw the same thing the judges saw – 115-113 in favor of the redhead. I had Alvarez taking seven of the first eight, with Golovkin sweeping the last four to fall just short. Sounds like your wife knows her stuff, Doug; I agreed with her comments you posted on Twitter about the commentators not acknowledging the work GGG was getting done. Too often, those calling the fight get on a tangent and are late to the party when things take a turn. I think the judges generally get it right; the only decision I have strongly disagreed with in years was Josh Taylor-Jack Catterall. I'm always spot-on with the guys in Vegas. Love The Ring, thanks for your continued great work!

Nick N.
Murray, Ky.

DOUG FISCHER'S RESPONSE: Thank you for the kind words for me, The Ring and for my wife. And thanks for following me on Twitter @dougiefischer. I was surprised by the positive response to her commentary on DAZN's commentators on my timeline. She might have a future as a boxing pundit.

DOUBLING UP

What is The Ring policy regarding rating the same fighter in two different weight divisions at the same time? It baffles me a little bit that you still rate Dina Thorslund at both bantamweight and junior featherweight. Thorslund relinquished her title and hasn't fought in the junior featherweight division since September 26, 2020. That's two years ago. As we speak, she has no scheduled fights according to BoxRec. Her last three title fights have all been in the bantamweight division. Therefore I think it would make more sense to only rank her in that division and let someone else fill up the empty spot in the junior featherweight division.

Lars Hansen

DIEGO MORILLA'S RESPONSE: Thank you for taking an interest in our trailblazing Women's Ratings, Mr. Hansen.

Our policy depends on the amount of fights and the importance of the fights in which fighters engage in each weight. In general, a fighter would have to be supremely talented and active in both weight classes in order to be rated in two divisions. A good example would be Seniesa Estrada, who goes back and forth between her two main weights – strawweight and junior flyweight – almost all the time, while others take some extra time to settle in any particular weight class.

This situation is particularly challenging in women's boxing, since "weight surfing" is more common for ladies than it is for men. The lack of viable or profitable

competition in a given class and also the search for bigger challenges usually push women towards other divisions in search of better paydays or achievements. Recent cases include Natasha Jonas, who after switching back and forth around the lightweight division finally jumped all the way to junior middleweight, or Terri Harper, who jumped three weight classes to become champion at 154 pounds as well without any prior fights at that weight (Harper will exit the lightweight ratings this week, by the way).

This reality makes it difficult for us to keep up, and the pandemic stretched our tolerance for inactivity beyond what we may have ideally accepted. We basically gave everyone an extra year to figure out where they would be headed after the hiatus forced upon them by the circumstances, and we are just recently making decisions about fighters' inactivity (we usually drop them after one year of inactivity at the weight). Claressa Shields' inactivity-induced vacancy of her Ring 154-pound title is just one of such decisions, and others will follow.

The recent retirement of our No. 1 junior featherweight Jackie Nava will definitely alter our ratings in that division, and we have just asked Thorslund's handlers about her plans for the future. If she has a fight already scheduled at 122 pounds, then we may allow her to stay there for a while. Otherwise, she will have to drop out until further notice. Thanks again for your interest.

HISTORIC PUNCH

I'm enjoying the October 2022 issue greatly. The piece on mythical KO punches ("Jabs and Straight Writes") had me recalling the out-of-the-blue 15th-round KO of John Tate by Mike Weaver. I believe Big John had won at least 10 of the 14 previous rounds. It was the punch that "made" Mike Weaver's legacy

Dave Joenks
San Jose, Calif.

BEDTIME FOR BOXING

For me and other boxing fans here in the eastern U.S. that watch the boxing matches on all those networks and channels, they start so late that when the main event comes on, it is almost 11 p.m. and after. In Las Vegas and in California and Texas, where most boxing is, they are two and three hours behind us. That's OK for them, but for us it is almost midnight here. Even in New York and in other areas in the East, they start late too. I would hope the promoters and networks think of starting the events earlier. Also, the fighters aren't fighting each other like most fans like to see. Fighters call out other fighters but do not sign the contract. David Benavidez gets called out by a couple of fighters, but the fighters do not sign the contract. They are afraid of him. These fighters I do not name. They know who they are! They are wasting their time and prime and losing good purses and getting older! Benavidez can't get a fight! David Lemieux from Canada was courageous enough to go to Benavidez's home state of Arizona to face him but lost. It would be good for boxing if the promoters and networks could get together and make agreements to give the boxing fans more interesting fights on TV.

Richard Prince
Gorham, N.H.

CORRECTION

In the October issue ratings summary it says that Mark Magsayo took Gary Russell Jr.'s "0" in January. He had already lost to Lomachenko a few years ago!

Thomas Farley

BRIAN HARTY'S RESPONSE: Thanks for catching that, Thomas. My mistake. So much time passes between Russell's fights that I forget his history.

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TOM HOGAN

RINGSIDE BY DOUG FISCHER

NOT A GOODBYE

The cover for The Ring's first issue.

Looking back on the 50-year-old institution he founded, Nat Fleischer admitted how naive he was of publishing, the boxing world, and even fandom, when he launched The Ring magazine in 1922.

"Little did I dream about the difficulties to be encountered in purchasing paper, in dealing with printers, in writing about boxers in their atmosphere of controversy and jealousies and, last but not least, in meeting the complicated elements of readers' likes and dislikes," Fleischer wrote in one of his final columns published in the June 1972 issue commemorating the magazine's 50th anniversary.

"My early deficiencies are exposed by the fact that in my first edition, February 1922, the cover displays not Jack Dempsey but Lord Lonsdale and Tex Rickard."

Had Fleischer known then what he understood 50 years later, he undoubtedly would have made the wildly popular heavyweight champion the cover star of the inaugural issue. It may have looked something like the cover of the issue you now hold in your hands.

Why are we paying homage to Dempsey? Well, it was the Manassa Mauler, boxing's first million-dollar attraction, who inspired Fleischer to lead a magazine that would protect the sanctity of the newly legalized sport. Dempsey's success would encourage other states to sanction and regulate boxing as New York had done in 1920 with its Walker Law, but who would watch the watchmen?

In his "Nat Fleischer Speaks Out" column for the June 1972 issue, the venerable Editor-In-Chief proposed a toast to "the old, virile and persistent publication" that spelled out his mission:

"Let us drink to the magazine's unflinching honesty of purpose, its devotion to the good and welfare of boxing the world over, its fierce determination in the cause of Law and Order, its habit of overcoming handicaps, our hard working staff, and its unswerving policy that a world championship, unless it be resigned, must be won and lost in the ring and not in the offices of commissions and associations."

Fleischer's "honesty of purpose," "devotion to the good and welfare of boxing the world over," and "unswerving" championship policy will continue into the 2020s by the current Ring Magazine staff.

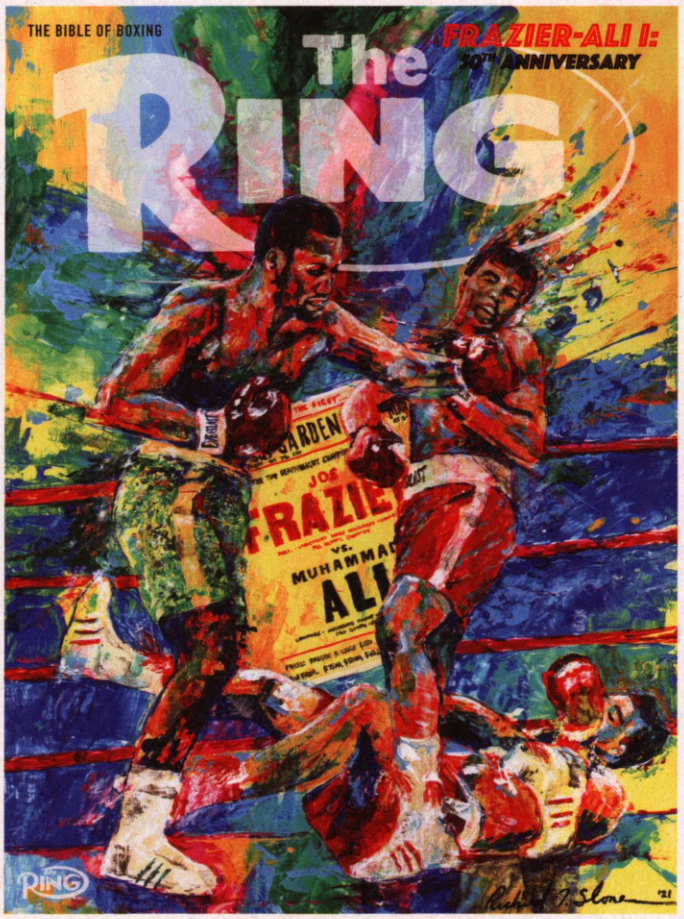
However, everything that challenged Fleischer 100 years ago when he started The Ring exists today. We can deal with controversy and jealousies, as well as "the complicated elements of readers' likes and dislikes," but the difficulties that Fleischer encountered in purchasing paper and in "dealing with printers" has finally led to the difficult decision of discontinuing the monthly magazine.

Yes, this is the final print issue of The Ring. But this is not goodbye.

Our readers – and hopefully our loyal longtime subscribers, some of whom have received this magazine in the mail since before I was born – can find all the features and departments that made the monthly publication special on RingTV.com, as well as The Ring's social media platforms.

And this is not the end of The Ring on the printed page. There will be special issues, fight programs, books – softcovers and glossy coffee-table hardcovers – and back-issue compendiums.

I look forward to the official announcements of The Ring's partnerships with respected book publishers – as well as a global sportswear manufacturer, a sports technology company, and a video game development studio – in the coming months. I look forward to those collaborations.



Richard T. Slone's dynamic cover for the April 2021 issue.

But for now, I just want to take a deep breath as I take a look back and appreciate what The Ring staff produced during my five-year tenure as Editor-In-Chief. My time was just a drop in the bucket compared to Fleischer's reign, but there was still a learning curve. And, like the founder, there are things I would do differently if I knew then what I know now.

However, I'm mostly proud of what my colleagues – a small but dedicated group – accomplished. Against all odds, we fought off and outlasted various corporate vultures who wanted to kill the publication for selfish reasons. We endured so that The Ring could celebrate its milestone 100th birthday in February.

Counting this issue, we've produced 57 magazines (59 counting the Four Kings special, which was created outside of the 2020 monthly schedule, and the ShoBox 20th anniversary program that was packaged with the August 2021 issue). The first Ring magazine with Yours Truly as EIC was the March 2018 issue (which was completed in late 2017) with Gennadiy Golovkin on the cover. Despite the dubious draw against Canelo Alvarez, he was No. 1 in our middleweight and pound-for-pound rankings (amazingly, he's still the top-rated middleweight).

Over the next five years, we chronicled the controversial buildup to GGG's Fight-of-the-Year rematch with Canelo, the Mexican star's ascension to the P4P and box-office thrones, as well as an elite heavyweight shuffle involving Tyson Fury, Anthony Joshua, Deontay Wilder, Joseph Parker, Andy Ruiz, and now Oleksander Usyk and Joe Joyce.

We documented British promoter Eddie Hearn's bold move into the U.S. scene, the scintillating rise of The Monster, the inspirational comeback of Chocolatito, Manny Pacquiao's last hurrah, the emergence of women's boxing, and the potential lightweight/junior welterweight round-robin between Tank Davis, Ryan Garcia, Devin Haney, Teofimo

Lopez and Shakur Stevenson.

We covered the neverending "superfight" stories of Spence vs. Crawford and Fury vs. Joshua (and we'll probably continue to do so in 2023).

When I look back on these past issues (which you can do as well by going to ringtv.com/past-issues) I'm filled with pride at the sight of the covers to our tributes to the icons (Sugar Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier), the living legends (Larry Holmes, Mike Tyson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Felix Trinidad, Oscar De La Hoya and Manny Pacquiao), and to the gone-too-soon greats (Pernell Whitaker and Marvelous Marvin Hagler).

I'm reminded of the retired boxers who served as guest editors for issues previewing big fights and providing the forewords to our specials: Holmes, Sugar Ray Leonard, George Foreman, Lennox Lewis, Evander Holyfield, Bernard Hopkins, Naseem Hamed, Ricky Hatton, Kelly Pavlik, Donald Curry, Fernando Vargas, Gerry Cooney and my personal favorite, Julian Jackson (who tried to explain his freakish power in the foreword to our 100 Greatest Punchers special).

I'm struck by the beauty and brilliance of the illustrated covers, often painted by renowned artist and longtime contributor Richard T. Slone, who did nine during my tenure. Slone painted the covers of the Dream Fight issues (Mayweather vs. Leonard, Pacquiao vs. Hamed, Fury vs. Tyson, and Duran vs. Whitaker), as well as the Frazier-Ali, Julio Cesar Chavez and Oscar De La Hoya specials. The magazine's rich illustrated cover history was also supported by Patrick J. Killian (who painted the cover to the July 2018 issue that previewed a potential Wilder vs. Joshua showdown), celebrated manga author/artist George Morikawa (who rendered the cover for the September 2019 issue depicting Naoya Inoue, which is already a hot collector's item), and Alain A. Amirkhanian, the illustrator known as KronkAAArt (who created the yearbook-style cover for the April 2020 issue that showcased the up-and-comers of the sport).

The September 2019 issue stands out with manga-style cover art.

I was honored to commission established artists, like Slone and Morikawa, to contribute to the magazine but just as pleased to work with new talent, such as Killian, Amirkhanian and Jiovanny Lopez, who did a great job on the cover to this issue, as well as Amanda Kelley, who contributed art to the De La Hoya special.

The same philosophy of mixing veterans with newcomers existed with the editorial. Two nonagenarian hall of famers I was thrilled to recruit in recent years are Larry Merchant, who wrote the foreword to the Pacquiao special and an essay for the Frazier-Ali I 50th anniversary issue, and Jerry Izenberg, who penned an article for the Holmes special. Ron Lipton has been involved in boxing for decades but he was new to writing. However, the combination of his imagination and passion for the sport's history has created fascinating fan fiction in the form of Mythical Matchups that we've featured in several issues. (Be sure to check out page 98 for Ron's take on Joe Louis vs. Mike Tyson.)

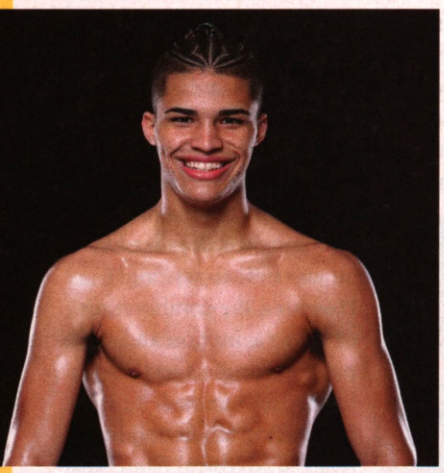
I can go on and on – and for a detailed list of 'thank yous' to all The Ring's staff and contributors, past and present, see the Ringside column I wrote for the 100th anniversary issue – but a special shoutout is needed for managing editor Tom Gray, who has been a visionary team member. It was Tom who spearheaded most of the special issues – including the Four Kings, Tyson and Pacquiao bestsellers – and it was his idea to feature the little giants, Inoue and Roman Gonzalez, as well as undisputed women's lightweight champion Katie Taylor, on the cover.

I will miss the magazine brainstorming sessions with Tom, senior editor Brian Harty and creative director Lamar Clark, but I'm looking forward to our reimagining the Ring mission and legacy for new mediums and wider audiences.

I sincerely hope that you, our loyal readers, join us on this new journey.

NEW FACES: XANDER ZAYAS

By **Anson Wainwright.**



AGE: 20
BORN: San Juan, Puerto Rico
HOMETOWN: Sunrise, Florida
WEIGHT CLASS: Junior middleweight
HEIGHT/ REACH:
5-foot-10 (178 cm) / 74 in. (188 cm)
AMATEUR RECORD: 122-14
TURNED PRO: 2019
PRO RECORD: 14-0 (10 knockouts)
TRAINER: Javiel Centeno
MANAGER: Peter Kahn
PROMOTER: Top Rank
TWITTER: @XanderZayas

BEST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Zayas is most content with his stoppage win over Dan Karpency on the undercard of promotional stablemate Shakur Stevenson's challenge to then-junior lightweight titleholder Jamel Herring in October 2021.

"I was able to follow every step of the game plan," Zayas told The Ring. "I was able to break him down and make him quit. That was something I wanted to do, and it was something really special being my first co-main event."

WORST NIGHT OF PRO CAREER AND WHY: Although Zayas scored a six-round shutout against James Martin in February 2021, he wasn't satisfied with his performance.

"I felt like if I could have picked up the pace a little more in the later rounds, I could have got my opponent out of there," he said. "I was happy with it because I won and it was an easy fight, but I know I could have got him out of there."

WHY HE'S A PROSPECT: Zayas won 11 Puerto Rican and U.S. national titles during an outstanding amateur career. At the tender age of 16, he became the youngest fighter ever to sign a promotional contract with Top Rank.

Zayas faced the more experienced Elias Espadas on the August 13 Teofimo Lopez-Pedro Campa undercard and scored a pair of eye-catching knockdowns en route to a fifth-round stoppage.

He feels he has two key skills that separate him from the competition.

"The accuracy and the constant pressure I can put on somebody, just being in front of them, hunting them down," he said. "I feel like that's very special and a very good talent I possess."

Two-division titleholder Tim Bradley, who now serves as a commentator for ESPN, is a big admirer.

"The one thing I see in Xander Zayas – and you want to see it in every prospect – you want to see them continuously getting better and better in each fight, no matter who they're fighting. You want to see new wrinkles," said Bradley. "If you have talent like Xander Zayas, you can become whatever you want to be. He's exceptional; he really is.

"He's the one Puerto Rico's been needing. I will bet money on his stock that this young man will become the next Puerto Rican great. That's how much I believe in this young man."

WHY HE'S A SUSPECT: "We're still working on every area," said Zayas. "I feel like I don't stop learning in any area. But if there's an area I would like to concentrate and focus on – and we are focusing on (it) – it's the inside game. I already know that I can control mid-range and long-range; now we just want to control the inside game too."

Bradley has seen gradual improvement but feels there is more to come.

"One thing I've spoken to Xander Zayas personally about was getting his legs stronger; he needs to get his foundation a bit stronger," said Bradley "I saw it in a fight in Arizona against Jose Luis Sanchez. His legs looked a little shaky in spots. Yes, it was hot outside; the temperature was scorching. It's tough fighting in that type of environment.

"This is a kid that always keeps an open mind. He's always looking to gain experience and learn from guys with experience. He's very optimistic in his approach, and his coaches are too; they're very open to constructive criticism, and you don't see that with a lot of coaches or fighters."

The former champion would also like to see Zayas fighting off the back foot more.

"He's going to be in there with guys who are going to be able to take his punch and they're going to be walking him down, and these are the types of fighters I hated fighting," said Bradley. "The best fighters in the world can pretty much do it all."

STORYLINES: Zayas was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and began boxing when he was just 5 years old.

"I was a victim of bullying, so my mom put me in boxing to learn how to defend myself," he said. "I fell in love with the sport. I like hard work; I like the dedication; I like the waking up early and going for a run. I liked all of that from a young age."

Things were initially difficult for Zayas when his family moved to Plantation, Florida, when he was 11.

"When I moved here, I didn't speak English," he explained. "It was a bit hard for me for the first couple of months, because I had to communicate in a whole different language. I had to make new friends. The only place I had to speak Spanish was in my house, so it was a bit difficult, but I picked it up really fast. Once we got used to it, everything kept getting better and better."

Not surprisingly, the young Boricua's boxing hero is four-weight world champion Miguel Cotto.

"He's the guy that I grew up watching from Puerto Rico," he said. "The guy that used to put all the family together to watch the fights. (He's) somebody I've met and (he's) such a gentleman."

He hopes to follow in Cotto's footsteps and be the next big thing in boxing crazy country.

Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter@AnsonWainwright.

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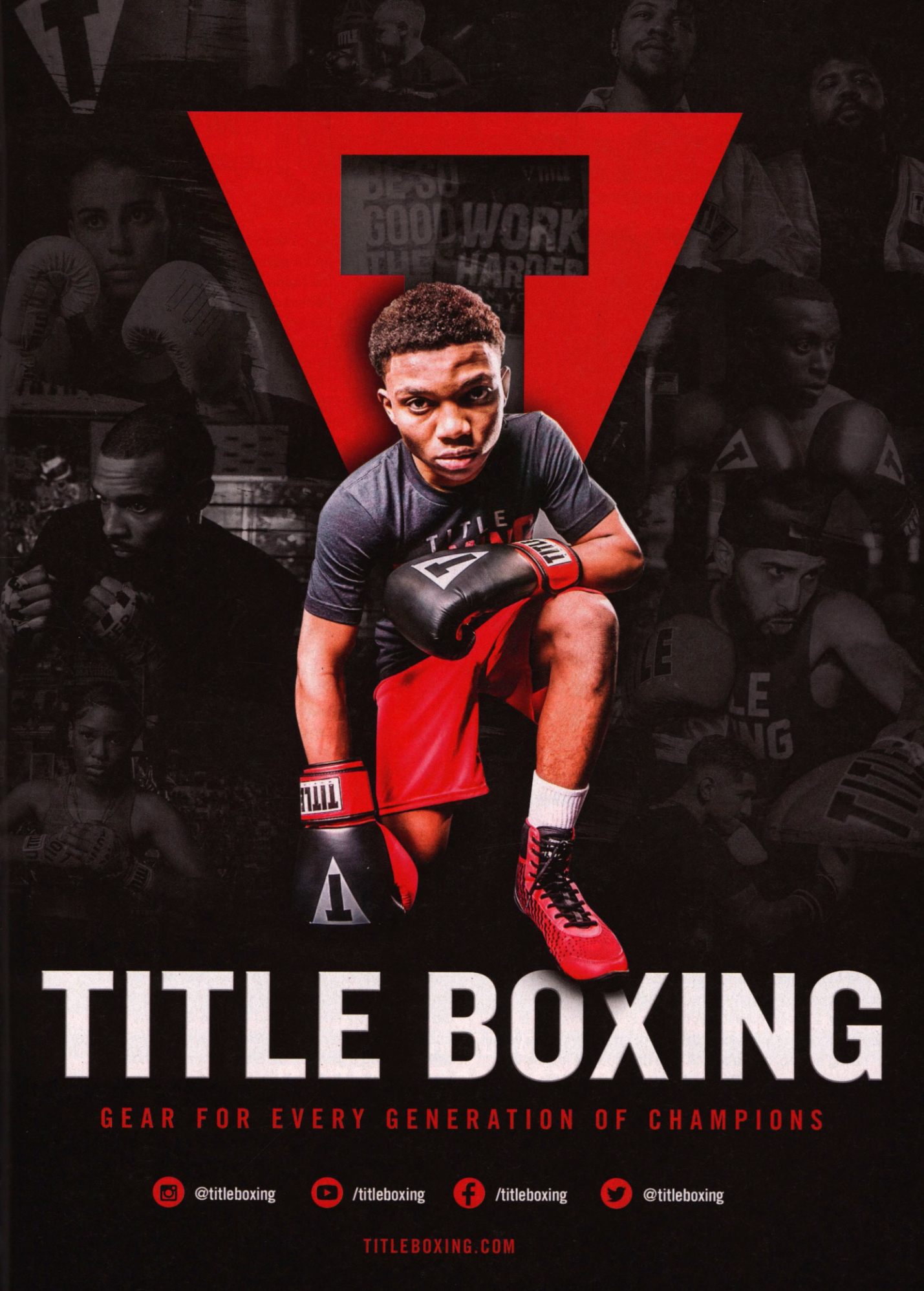
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FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

BY TOM GRAY

JOE JOYCE

A visible shower of blood and sweat splashed over ringsiders – that's when you know you're at a fight.

The sustained and brutal violence that took place between heavyweights Joe Joyce and Joseph Parker at the AO Arena in Manchester, England, was in sharp contrast to the joviality of the pre-fight buildup.

Joyce, a silver medalist at the Rio 2016 Olympics, is so laid back during interviews that he often looks on the verge of falling asleep, and a subtle little smile rarely leaves the Londoner's lips. New Zealand's Parker is one of the most personable and charming fighters in world boxing, and the former WBO titleholder's sense of humor is infectious.

The pair were always going to hit it off outside of the ring ... and they sure as hell hit it off inside of it.

From early on, they traded leather like there was no tomorrow. Parker (30-3, 21 KOs) inched back and walked Joyce onto huge right hands, uppercuts and a savage body assault. Undeterred, the home fighter marauded forward behind a busy jab and hammered home big power shots of his own. Stylistically, it was heavyweight heaven and the British crowd was at fever pitch.

The bad news for Parker was that the harder he hit his 6-foot-6, 271-pound nemesis, the more it worked against him. The visitor would land flush, world-class combinations and there would be no visible sign of damage. Instead, Joyce would up the pace, the pressure and the punishment.

By the seventh round, Parker was cut above the right eye and visibly fatigued. His fighting heart kept him in the game, but Joyce's suffocating presence and intensity was taking a severe toll on the New Zealander's resources.

Only Anthony Joshua and Dillian Whyte had ever defeated Parker, and both prevailed via unanimous decision. Joyce was determined to close the book inside schedule and he did just that.

In the 11th round, after being separated by referee Steve Gray, Joyce marched forward and released a single left hook. It wasn't fast, but it was powerful and delivered with sniper-like accuracy. Parker actually had his right hand up to catch the blow; however, the arc of the punch traveled in front of the glove and the shot caught him hard on the tip of the chin. The former champ crashed to the canvas and was unable to beat the count. The official time was 1:03.

Joyce improves to 15-0 (14 KOs), and he's one of the best heavyweights in the world today. The 37-year-old is incredibly effective and has the durability of an unstoppable horror movie villain. The elite-level players within boxing's glamour division have a potential nightmare ahead of them.

One-two, Joyce is coming for you.

Tom Gray is managing editor for Ring Magazine. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing.

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TEN THOUGHTS FROM JOHN

JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES

BY THOMAS HAUSER

I've written before about a fan named John who loves boxing, understands boxing and speaks his mind when talking about it. I wish more of today's writers and TV commentators had his insight and candor. Some thoughts that John has shared with me by email during the past year follow:

"Anyone who has been around boxing knows about bad influences in life."

"No one tells boxing what to do. That is a fact."

"Boxing is about having to look at stuff that sometimes only a beating can make you look at. Sounds crazy to most folks, but to me it makes a lot of sense."

"Being wrong is just another way to learn. Drop your hands and get caught with a punch and you learn a lot faster than someone telling you where to put your hands."

"Boxing fans are the most abused fans in all of sports. You pay the money to support local fights. You take the time to watch a fighter develop. Then the fighter finally moves up to a challenge and they've got their hand in your pocket like you're an idiot to be played."

"Seems like no one fights much anymore, but they do talk a lot."

"If you love the fights, logic and common sense have to leave you from time to time. It takes a certain character to follow boxing and not kick it or hate it or even wonder at times why you watch."

"Damn cold out there today. Not everyone knows what it's like to be cold. No one takes the time to write or talk about those things. All we get as fans is 'he grew up in poverty.' You see a fire in a rowhouse. Somebody got cold and did what he could to escape it. Dollar a night floor space. Either you pay it or you walk the streets. One dollar to lay on a floor and defend your space, an imaginary line you make in your mind that will not be crossed. It is your space, your spot, and you hate it. But it's yours and you will protect it. No different in the ring. Same things go through your mind. Someone wants to take your space, so you draw lines that will not be crossed. Do not let him take what is yours. Make him pay if he crosses the line. That's what you have to do to win a fight."

And a final thought regarding a women's fight that lived up to it's hype and gave boxing fans a spectacular event.

"I watched Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano the other night. A couple of little girls got their asses in the ring and embarrassed men's boxing."

★★★

Six years ago, Dave Hannigan wrote a pretty good book about Muhammad Ali's last fight against Trevor Berbick in the Bahamas in 1981. So I was looking forward to reading his most recent work.

Muhammad Ali: Fifteen Rounds in the Wilderness seeks to chronicle Ali's life during the 15 years between the end of Muhammad's ring career and his return to the spotlight when he lit the Olympic cauldron at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The book consists of 282 pages of separate segments that recount various Ali appearances on given days. One would have hoped that the segments would add up to an impressionistic portrait. But many of them are repetitive and there's no serious effort to place them within the framework of a meaningful narrative.

There's a good book to be written about these 15 years in Ali's life and the 20 years that followed. Unfortunately, *Muhammad Ali: Fifteen Rounds in the Wilderness* falls short of the mark.

★★★

Hamilcar began publishing books about boxing in 2019 and has contributed significantly to the literary history of the sweet science. *Sporting Blood* and *The Duke* by Carlos Acevedo, *Damage* by Tris Dixon, *Macho Time* by Christian Giudice, *Bundini* by Todd Snyder and

"Only in boxing would you keep the best from competing against the best. Don't sell me a damaged product and say it is the best I can get."

MIKEY WILLIAMS/TOP RANK INC

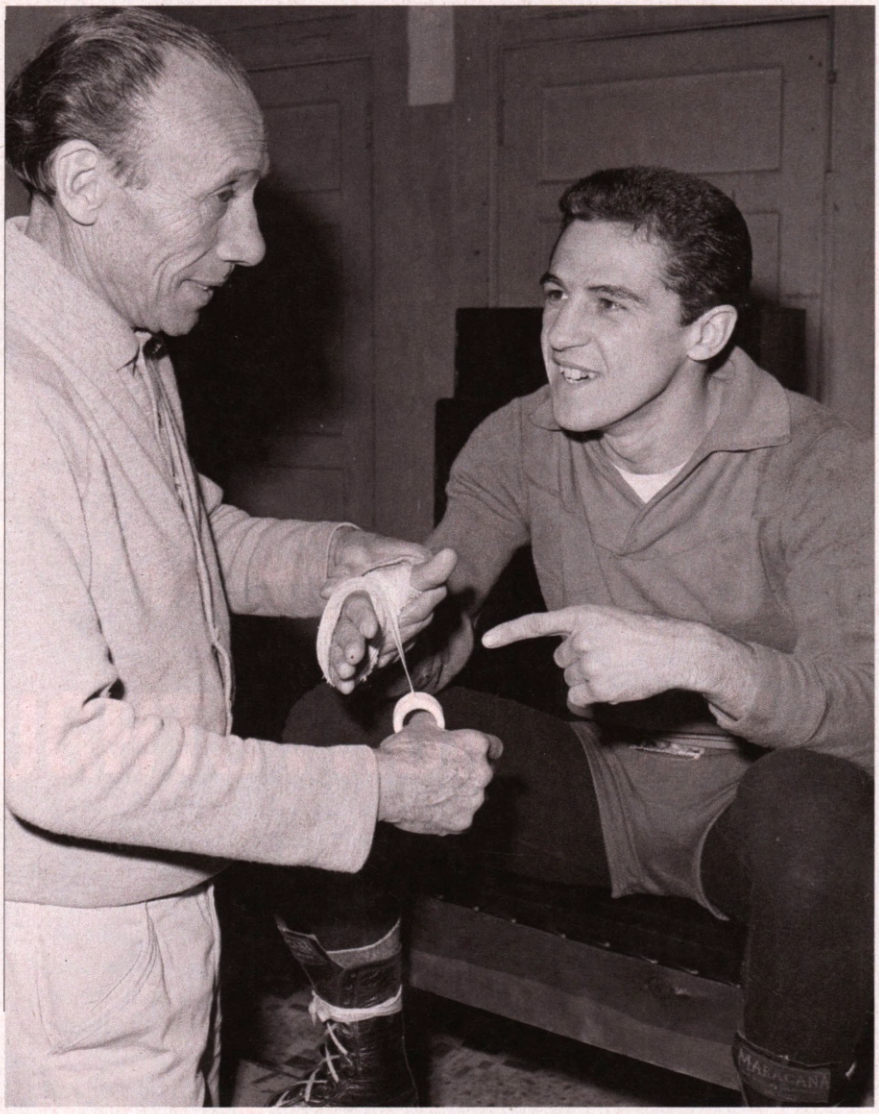
The War: Hagler-Hearns and Three Rounds for the Ages by Don Stradley are among its most notable titles. These offerings have been marked by solid editorial standards and excellent production values. And Hamilcar's books to date have been evergreen, meaning they should read as well 10 years from now as when they were first published.

But boxing is a hard sell and publisher Kyle Sarofeen acknowledges, "We didn't sell as many boxing books as we'd hoped to sell." So Hamilcar is adding true crime and music as subjects in its catalog.

True crime will be represented by *Boston Tabloid* – Don Stradley's recounting of the bludgeoning to death of a prostitute named Robin Benedict by a Tufts University professor four decades ago. That will be followed on the music side of the ledger by *Roadhouse Blues: Morrison, the Doors, and the Death Days of The Sixties* by Bob Batchelor.

Hamilcar will also continue to publish boxing books, although not as many as before. Next up in the fistic arena will be a biography of James Toney by Robert Anasi that's slated for publication next year.

★★★



Nobody did it better at 118 pounds than the great Eder Jofre.

I'd like to review Christopher J. Smith's biography of Eder Jofre. I can't because, to be honest, I haven't read it.

Eder Jofre: Brazil's First Boxing World Champion (Win by KO Publications) arrived in the mail several months ago, courtesy of the author and publisher. Jofre fought from 1957 through 1976 and reigned as world bantamweight and featherweight champion in an era when being a "world champion" had legitimate meaning. In 78 fights, he lost twice, each time in Japan on a razor-thin decision to Masahiko "Fighting" Harada.

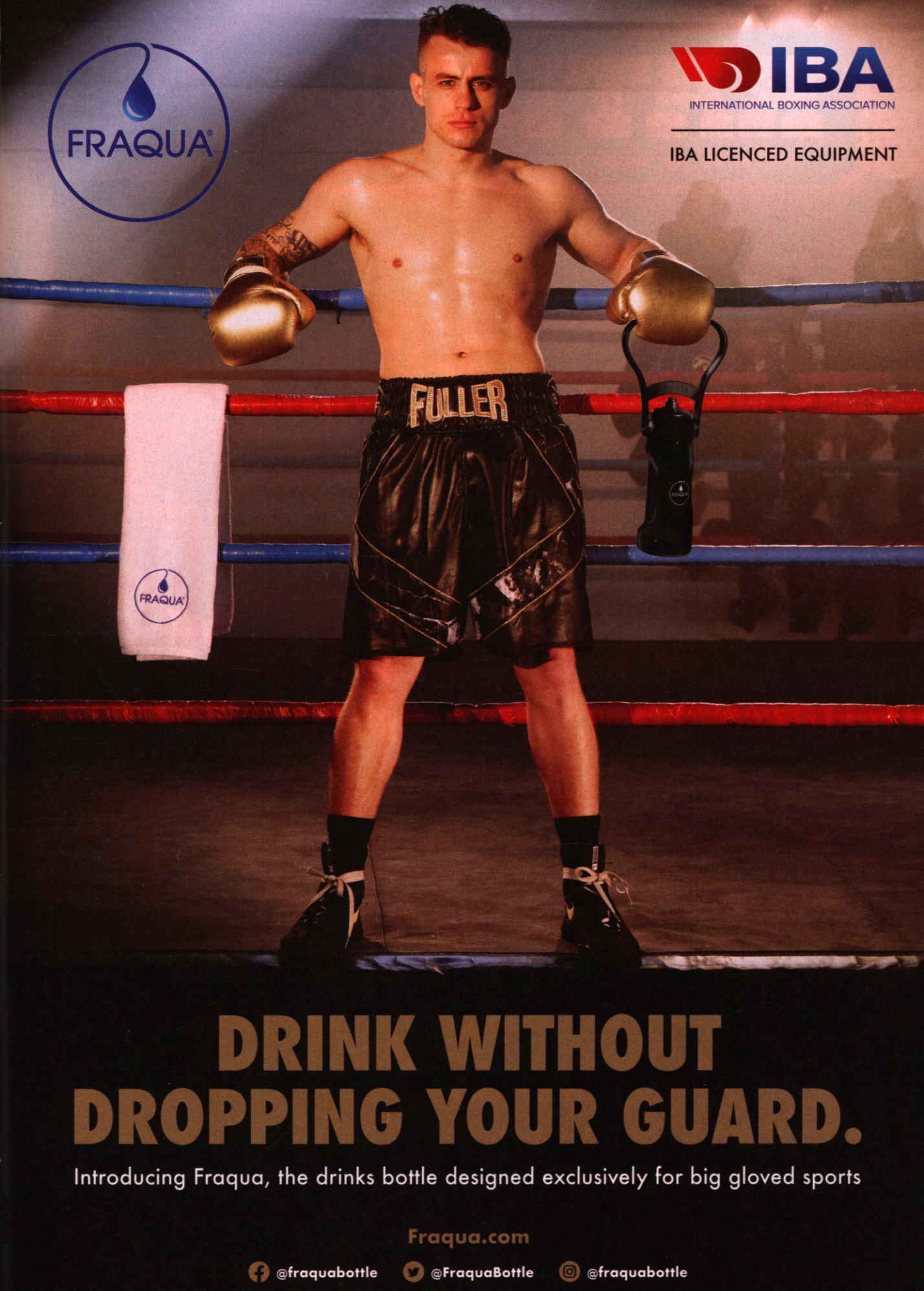
Jofre is on most credible lists of "greatest fighters of all time."

You can't tell a book by its cover (in this instance, a profile of Jofre with a gloved fist raised in triumph). So I opened *Eder Jofre* and looked inside. The book is long – 605 pages, more than 200,000 words printed in a small font. As I leafed through the chapters, it seemed to me that Smith thoroughly researched his subject and also that, if he found a piece of information having anything to do with Jofre, he put it in the book.

I've been unusually busy lately with personal and professional obligations. I haven't had time to read much. But I was starting to feel guilty about leaving Smith's tome unread. Hence this note.

Jofre died earlier this autumn, and most of the obituaries written about him were superficial at best. If you want a pile of information about a remarkable fighter, read this book. RING

Thomas Hauser's email address is thomashauserwriter@gmail.com. His most recent book – Broken Dreams: Another Year Inside Boxing – was published by the University of Arkansas Press. In 2004, the Boxing Writers Association of America honored Hauser with the Nat Fleischer Award for career excellence in boxing journalism. In 2019, he was selected for boxing's highest honor – induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.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RATINGS

SUMMARY ★ ANALYSIS

The Ring Ratings through fights of Sept. 24, 2022

RECENT FIGHT RESULTS AND CHANGES IN THE RING'S DIVISIONAL RANKINGS

BY **BRIAN HARTY**

HEAVYWEIGHT: Tyson Fury "retired" and vacated his championship for reasons best described by him later in this issue. There was talk on the Ratings Panel to ignore the big man and keep him instated, but we decided to play along.

The vacancy would be filled by a very deserving champion, however. Oleksandr Usyk (No. 1 last month) faced a more measured, better-prepared Anthony Joshua (No. 2) in their August rematch, but the decision again went in favor of the smaller fighter, this time by split decision. With Usyk's ascendancy, everyone on the list got a bump and Zhilei Zhang entered at No. 10. Zhang lost a unanimous decision to Filip Hrgovic on the undercard, but the Chinese fighter gave a good account of himself and some felt he deserved to win.

Andy Ruiz Jr. rose a spot to No. 4 after a unanimous decision over Luis Ortiz, who slipped from No. 6 to No. 7. The fact that Ruiz scored three knockdowns and only won by scores of 114-111 and 113-112 tells you that "Old Man Ortiz" isn't quite done, but his ability to withstand the demands of heavyweight prizefighting is definitely in question.

Joe Joyce, our Fighter of the Month, rose from No. 6 to viciously stake his claim in the heavyweight Top 3 with an 11th-round knockout of Joseph Parker, who dropped from No. 3 to No. 7. Read more about that on page 12.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: Callum Smith (No. 4) put Mathieu Bauderlique down twice with left hooks for a fourth-round knockout. It was a reaffirming performance from Smith as memories of the loss to Canelo Alvarez linger, but it'll take more to jump over the three power players above him. Bauderlique slipped off the list from No. 9, which made room for Craig Richards at No. 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: Christian Mbilli looked great in a second-round knockout of DeAndre Ware (unrated), flooring the American once with a left hook and two more times with overhand rights, but the panel kept him at No. 5 for the time being.

No. 3-rated junior bantamweight Jesse "Bam" Rodriguez (left) got an unexpectedly tough challenge from Israel Gonzalez.

The third fight between Canelo Alvarez and Gennadiy Golovkin wasn't the city-stomping battle of angry giants that people wanted, but it was decent. Canelo only fought in bursts but pretty much had his way until Golovkin came alive in the last few rounds and seemed to be building momentum. Time ran out, though, and the champ won by scores of 116-112, 115-113 and 115-113. At least there was no controversy this time.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: Sergiy Derevyanchenko finally got an easier assignment and added another "W" to his record, a unanimous decision over Joshua Conley, to snap a string of three losses. The Ukrainian stayed at No. 9.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: Liam Smith stopped Hassan Mwakinyo (unrated) in four rounds to hold his position at No. 7.

WELTERWEIGHT: Vergil Ortiz notched the 19th knockout in his 19-fight career with a nine-round drubbing of Michael McKinson, successfully targeting McKinson's liver for a pair of knockdowns at the end – a good win for the No. 5-rated Texan but not enough to move up.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: Gary Antuanne Russell (No. 9 last month) dropped former two-division titleholder Rances Barthelemy (unrated) with a lunging right hook for the win in Round 6, securing a two-spot promotion for himself. Russell is now 16-0 with 16 knockouts.

Shojahon Ergashev (No. 8) stayed busy with five rounds of target practice against Angel Martinez.

Previously unrated but also undefeated, Alberto Puello picked up the vacant WBA title using sharp counterpunching to blunt the aggression of Batyr Akhmedov (No. 9 last month). The Dominican, who became the first fighter from his country to win a title at 140, entered at No. 9, pushing Akhmedov down a notch and forcing Sandor Martin off the list.

LIGHTWEIGHT: Still stinging from his upset loss to George Kambosos last year, Teofimo Lopez (No. 2 last month) said goodbye to 135 pounds and scored a seventh-round stoppage against Pedro Campa at 140 (not enough to get him rated there). Lopez's departure cleared out a space for undefeated Dominican Michel Rivera, who has been building a very solid resume on Showtime during the past couple years.

Both former titleholders who started their pro careers in 2011, Richard Commey (No. 8 last month) and Jose Pedraza (unrated) fought to a draw at junior welterweight. Commey was dropped from the list and undefeated Argentine Gustavo Lemos entered at No. 10.

Isaac Cruz crumbled Eduardo Ramirez (rated No. 10 at junior lightweight) with a left hook-straight right combo in the second round and remained ranked at No. 5.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT: With Ramirez going up to face Cruz at 135, he was replaced by Lamont Roach at No. 10.

On the same card as countryman Alberto Puello's triumph, Hector Garcia (No. 7 last month) brilliantly outworked Roger Gutierrez (No. 3 at the time) to take his WBA title by unanimous decision – another impressive result for Garcia, who dominated Chris Colbert for an upset win back in February. The Dominican rose all the way to No. 2 as a result of this victory, while Gutierrez fell to No. 7.

Shakur Stevenson lost his Ring championship and other titles after missing weight and stating his intention to move up, but he went ahead with his fight against Robson Conceicao and easily outpointed the Brazilian, who dropped a notch to No. 5.

FEATHERWEIGHT: No. 1-rated Emanuel Navarrete defended his WBO title in painful fashion, landing a left hook to Eduardo Baez's body for a classic delayed-reaction knockdown in the sixth round. Up until that moment, the unrated challenger had been doing well, so it was a tougher-than-expected return to action for Navarrete after a 10-month layoff.

Kid Galahad has risen to lightweight, so he was removed from the No. 9 slot and Michael Conlan returned at No. 10.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHT: Angelo Leo (No. 3 last month) hasn't fought since June 2021, so he was removed and Filipino Mike Plania came in at No. 10.

Daniel Roman (No. 3) retired with a record of 29-4-1 (10 KOs) and thus exited the ratings. The resulting shift made room for Takuma Inoue at No. 10. Ra'eese Aleem, who ended up at No. 3, would've been deserving of a promotion that week regardless, having won a dominant decision over Plania in Los Angeles.

RATINGS

Through fights of Sept. 24, 2022

BANTAMWEIGHT: Alejandro Santiago remained at No. 10 after winning a unanimous decision over fellow Mexican David Carmona (unrated).

No. 1-rated John Riel Casimero was removed for inactivity and No. 5-rated Rau'shee Warren was removed after losing to journeyman Francisco Pedroza. These departures left the door open for a pair of Japanese fighters: Keita Kurihara at No. 9 and Ryosuke Nishida at No. 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT: Juan Francisco Estrada was facing a "nobody" in Argi Cortes on September 3, but Cortes came to fight and stunned the champ a couple times. Estrada had the skills and experience to scrape out a narrow decision, but it was surprisingly difficult. A third fight with Roman Gonzalez in December now looms.

In another surprisingly challenging fight, Jesse Rodriguez (No. 3) got much more than anyone expected from Israel Gonzalez on the Canelo-GGG undercard. "Bam" won a comfortably wide decision (probably too wide), but you know things didn't go according to plan when what's supposed to be a coming-out party for a star turns into a showcase for the loser.

FLYWEIGHT: South Africa's Jackson Chauke kept the machinery in working order with a unanimous decision over countryman Sinethemba Kotana and stayed put at No. 9.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT: Carlos Canizales knocked out fellow Mexican Armando Torres (unrated) in one round to hold his position at No. 9. Masamichi Yabuki (No. 6) also kept his ranking with a seventh-round stoppage of unrated Thanongsak Simsri.

Sivenathi Nontshinga (No. 7 last month) went to Mexico and took the IBF title from Hector Flores Calixto by split decision, a very impressive win that garnered a two-spot promotion for the South African.

STRAWWEIGHT: Petchmanee CP Freshmart (No. 2) held onto his position with a hard-fought defense of his WBC title against Norihito Tanaka (unrated) in Thailand.

POUND FOR POUND: There were no hysterics on the Ratings Panel about Usyk clearly being the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter after his second win over Joshua. It was more about him either being just a little bit more or a little bit less deserving than Naoya Inoue (No. 1 last month). Multiple opinions ended with some form of "but I'm OK either way." It's difficult to boil down what eventually clinched it for Usyk (No. 2 last month) – there were insinuations that maybe Inoue's last win, a second-round knockout of Nonito Donaire, was a little overplayed, or that Inoue hasn't dealt with the same level of hostile territory in which Usyk has prevailed. Then again, maybe Usyk's victory was overplayed in the excitement of the moment. Support for Inoue remains very high among all panelists, so it's quite possible he'll sit on the throne again at some point.

P4P

1. **OLEKSANDR USYK** — Ukraine • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
2. **NAOYA INOUE** — Japan • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
3. **TERENCE CRAWFORD** — U.S. • 38-0-0 (29 KOs)
4. **ERROL SPENCE JR.** — U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
5. **CANELO ALVAREZ** — Mexico • 58-2-2 (39 KOs)
6. **VASILIY LOMACHENKO** — Ukraine • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)
7. **DMITRY BIVOL** — Russia • 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
8. **JOSH TAYLOR** — U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
9. **JERMELL CHARLO** — U.S. • 35-1-1 (19 KOs)
10. **ARTUR BETERBIEV** — Russia • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

- C **OLEKSANDR USYK** RING, IBF, WBA, WBO — Ukraine • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 1 **ANTHONY JOSHUA** — U.K. • 24-3-0 (22 KOs)
- 2 **DEONTAY WILDER** — U.S. • 42-2-1 (41 KOs)
- 3 **JOE JOYCE** — U.K. • 15-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 4 **ANDY RUIZ JR.** — U.S. • 35-2-0 (22 KOs)
- 5 **DILLIAN WHYTE** — U.K. • 28-3-0 (19 KOs)
- 6 **LUIS ORTIZ** — Cuba • 33-3-0 (28 KOs)
- 7 **JOSEPH PARKER** — New Zealand • 30-3-0 (21 KOs)
- 8 **FILIP HRGOVIC** — Croatia • 15-0-0 (12 KOs)
- 9 **FRANK SANCHEZ** — Cuba • 20-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 10 **ZHILEI ZHANG** — China • 24-1-1 (19 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 POUNDS

- C **JAI OPETAIA** RING, IBF — Australia • 22-0-0 (17 KOs)
- 1 **LAWRENCE OKOLIE** WBO — U.K. • 18-0-0 (14 KOs)
- 2 **MAIRIS BRIEDIS** — Latvia • 28-2-0 (20 KOs)
- 3 **YUNIEL DORTICOS** — Cuba • 25-2-0 (23 KOs)
- 4 **ILUNGA MAKABU** WBC — Congo • 29-2-0 (25 KOs)
- 5 **THABISO MCHUNU** — S. Africa • 23-6-0 (13 KOs)
- 6 **ALEKSEI PAPIN** — Russia • 14-1-0 (13 KOs)
- 7 **RICHARD RIAKPORHE** — U.K. • 15-0-0 (11 KOs)
- 8 **MATEUSZ MASTERNAK** — Poland • 46-5-0 (31 KOs)
- 9 **CHRIS BILLAM-SMITH** — U.K. • 16-1-0 (11 KOs)
- 10 **RYAD MERHY** — Belgium • 30-1-0 (25 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 POUNDS

- C **(VACANT)**
- 1 **DMITRY BIVOL** WBA — Russia • 20-0-0 (11 KOs)
- 2 **ARTUR BETERBIEV** IBF, WBC, WBO — Russia • 18-0-0 (18 KOs)
- 3 **GILBERTO RAMIREZ** — Mexico • 44-0-0 (30 KOs)
- 4 **CALLUM SMITH** — U.K. • 29-1-0 (21 KOs)
- 5 **MARCUS BROWNE** — U.S. • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)
- 6 **JOE SMITH JR.** — U.S. • 28-4-0 (22 KOs)
- 7 **JOSHUA BUATSI** — U.K. • 16-0-0 (13 KOs)
- 8 **ANTHONY YARDE** — U.K. • 22-2-0 (21 KOs)
- 9 **JEAN PASCAL** — Canada • 36-6-1 (20 KOs)
- 10 **CRAIG RICHARDS** — U.K. • 17-3-1 (10 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

- C **CANELO ALVAREZ** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO — Mexico • 58-2-2 (39 KOs)
- 1 **DAVID BENAVIDEZ** — U.S. • 26-0-0 (23 KOs)
- 2 **CALEB PLANT** — U.S. • 21-1-0 (12 KOs)
- 3 **ANTHONY DIRRELL** — U.S. • 34-2-2 (25 KOs)
- 4 **JOHN RYDER** — U.K. • 31-5-0 (17 KOs)
- 5 **CHRISTIAN MBILLI** — France • 22-0-0 (20 KOs)
- 6 **ZACH PARKER** — U.K. • 22-0-0 (16 KOs)
- 7 **DAVID MORRELL** — Cuba • 7-0-0 (6 KOs)
- 8 **ERIK BAZINYAN** — Canada • 28-0-0 (21 KOs)
- 9 **LERRONE RICHARDS** — U.K. • 16-0-0 (3 KOs)
- 10 **VLADIMIR SHISHKIN** — Russia • 13-0-0 (8 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

- **C** (VACANT)
- **1** **GENNADIY GOLOVKIN** IBF, WBA
  Kazakhstan • 42-2-1 (37 KOs)
- **2** **JERMALL CHARLO** WBC
  U.S. • 32-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **3** **DEMETRIUS ANDRADE**
  U.S. • 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
- **4** **JAIME MUNGUIA**
  Mexico • 40-0-0 (32 KOs)
- **5** **ZHANIBEK ALIMKHANULY** WBO
  Kazakhstan • 12-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **6** **CHRIS EUBANK JR.**
  U.K. • 32-2-0 (23 KOs)
- **7** **RYOTA MURATA**
  Japan • 16-3-0 (13 KOs)
- **8** **CARLOS ADAMES**
  Dom. Rep. • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)
- **9** **SERGIY DEREVYANCHENKO**
  Ukraine • 14-4-0 (10 KOs)
- **10** **ERISLANDY LARA**
  Cuba • 29-3-3 (17 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

- **C** **JERMELL CHARLO** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
  U.S. • 35-1-1 (19 KOs)
- **1** **BRIAN CASTANO**
  Argentina • 17-1-2 (12 KOs)
- **2** **SEBASTIAN FUNDORA**
  U.S. • 19-0-1 (13 KOs)
- **3** **TIM TSZYU**
  Australia • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **4** **TONY HARRISON**
  U.S. • 29-3-1 (21 KOs)
- **5** **ERICKSON LUBIN**
  U.S. • 24-2-0 (17 KOs)
- **6** **MAGOMED KURBANOV**
  Russia • 23-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **7** **LIAM SMITH**
  U.K. • 32-3-1 (19 KOs)
- **8** **ISRAIL MADRIMOV**
  Uzbekistan • 8-0-1 (6 KOs)
- **9** **MICHEL SORO**
  France • 35-3-2 (24 KOs)
- **10** **CARLOS OCAMPO**
  Mexico • 34-1-0 (22 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

- **C** (VACANT)
- **1** **ERROL SPENCE JR.** IBF, WBA, WBC
  U.S. • 28-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **2** **TERENCE CRAWFORD** WBO
  U.S. • 38-0-0 (29 KOs)
- **3** **JARON ENNIS**
  U.S. • 29-0-0 (27 KOs)
- **4** **YORDENIS UGAS**
  Cuba • 27-5-0 (12 KOs)
- **5** **VERGIL ORTIZ JR.**
  U.S. • 19-0-0 (19 KOs)
- **6** **EIMANTAS STANIONIS**
  Lithuania • 14-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **7** **KEITH THURMAN**
  U.S. • 30-1-0 (22 KOs)
- **8** **DAVID AVANESYAN**
  Russia • 29-3-1 (17 KOs)
- **9** **CONOR BENN**
  U.K. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **10** **RADZHAB BUTAEV**
  Russia • 14-1-0 (11 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

- **C** **JOSH TAYLOR** RING, WBO
  U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)
- **1** **REGIS PROGRAIS**
  U.S. • 27-1-0 (23 KOs)
- **2** **JOSE RAMIREZ**
  U.S. • 27-1-0 (17 KOs)
- **3** **JOSE ZEPEDA**
  U.S. • 35-2-0 (27 KOs)
- **4** **JACK CATTERALL**
  U.K. • 26-1-0 (13 KOs)
- **5** **SUBRIEL MATIAS**
  Puerto Rico • 18-1-0 (18 KOs)
- **6** **ARNOLD BARBOZA**
  U.S. • 27-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **7** **GARY ANTUANNE RUSSELL**
  U.S. • 16-0-0 (16 KOs)
- **8** **SHOHJAHON ERGASHEV**
  Uzbekistan • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
- **9** **ALBERTO PUELLO** WBO
  Dom. Rep. • 21-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **10** **BATYR AKHMEDOV**
  Russia • 9-2-0 (8 KOs)

Former unified champ Andy Ruiz Jr. moved up to No. 4 at heavyweight with a decision triumph over Luis Ortiz, who dropped to No. 6.

Unbeaten Croatian Filip Hrgovic moved up to No. 8 at heavyweight with a close points win over Zhilei Zhang, who entered at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

- **C** **DEVIN HANEY** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
  U.S. • 28-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **1** **GEORGE KAMBOSOS JR.**
  Australia • 20-1-0 (10 KOs)
- **2** **VASILIY LOMACHENKO**
  Ukraine • 16-2-0 (11 KOs)
- **3** **GERVONTA DAVIS**
  U.S. • 27-0-0 (25 KOs)
- **4** **RYAN GARCIA**
  U.S. • 23-0-0 (19 KOs)
- **5** **ISAAC CRUZ**
  Mexico • 24-2-1 (17 KOs)
- **6** **JOSEPH DIAZ JR.**
  U.S. • 32-2-1 (15 KOs)
- **7** **WILLIAM ZEPEDA**
  Mexico • 26-0-0 (23 KOs)
- **8** **FRANK MARTIN**
  U.S. • 16-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **9** **MICHEL RIVERA**
  Dom. Rep. • 23-0-0 (14 KOs)
- **10** **GUSTAVO LEMOS**
  Argentina • 28-0-0 (18 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

- **C** (VACANT)
- **1** **OSCAR VALDEZ**
  Mexico • 30-1-0 (23 KOs)
- **2** **HECTOR GARCIA** WBA
  Dom. Rep. • 16-0-0 (10 KOs)
- **3** **SHAVKATDZHON RAKHIMOV**
  Russia • 16-0-1 (13 KOs)
- **4** **JOE CORDINA** IBF
  U.K. • 15-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **5** **ROBSON CONCEICAO**
  Brazil • 17-2-0 (8 KOs)
- **6** **O'SHAQUIE FOSTER**
  U.S. • 19-2-0 (11 KOs)
- **7** **ROGER GUTIERREZ**
  Venezuela • 26-4-1 (20 KOs)
- **8** **KENICHI OGAWA**
  Japan • 26-2-1 (18 KOs)
- **9** **SAMIR ZIANI**
  France • 33-3-1 (8 KOs)
- **10** **LAMONT ROACH**
  U.S. • 23-1-1 (9 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

- **C** (VACANT)
- **1** **EMANUEL NAVARRETE** WBO
  Mexico • 36-1-0 (30 KOs)
- **2** **REY VARGAS** WBC
  Mexico • 36-0-0 (22 KOs)
- **3** **MARK MAGSAYO**
  Phil. • 24-1-0 (16 KOs)
- **4** **MAURICIO LARA**
  Mexico • 24-2-1 (17 KOs)
- **5** **JOSH WARRINGTON** IBF
  U.K. • 31-1-1 (8 KOs)
- **6** **LEIGH WOOD**
  U.K. • 26-2-0 (16 KOs)
- **7** **GARY RUSSELL JR.**
  U.S. • 31-2-0 (18 KOs)
- **8** **KIKO MARTINEZ**
  Spain • 43-11-2 (30 KOs)
- **9** **ROBEISY RAMIREZ**
  Cuba • 10-1-0 (6 KOs)
- **10** **MICHAEL CONLAN**
  Ireland • 17-1-0 (8 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

- **C** (VACANT)
- **1** **STEPHEN FULTON** WBC, WBO
  U.S. • 21-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **2** **MURODJON AKHMADALIEV** IBF, WBA
  Uzbekistan • 11-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **3** **RA'EESE ALEEM**
  U.S. • 20-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **4** **AZAT HOVHANNISYAN**
  Armenia • 21-3-0 (17 KOs)
- **5** **MARLON TAPALES**
  Phil. • 36-3-0 (19 KOs)
- **6** **LUIS NERY**
  Mexico • 32-1-0 (24 KOs)
- **7** **RONNY RIOS**
  U.S. • 33-4-0 (16 KOs)
- **8** **ZOLANI TETE**
  S. Africa • 30-4-0 (23 KOs)
- **9** **MIKE PLANIA**
  Phil. • 26-2-0 (13 KOs)
- **10** **TAKUMA INOUE**
  Japan • 16-1-0 (3 KOs)

RATINGS

Through fights of Sept. 24, 2022

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

- **C** **NAOYA INOUE** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC
  Japan • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)
- **1** **JASON MOLONEY**
  Australia • 24-2-0 (19 KOs)
- **2** **NONITO DONAIRE**
  Phil. • 42-7-0 (28 KOs)
- **3** **EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ**
  Puerto Rico • 20-2-0 (13 KOs)
- **4** **GARY ANTONIO RUSSELL**
  U.S. • 19-0-0 (12 KOs)
- **5** **LEE MCGREGOR**
  U.K. • 11-0-1 (9 KOs)
- **6** **VINCENT ASTROLABIO**
  Phil. • 17-3-0 (12 KOs)
- **7** **PAUL BUTLER** WBO
  U.K. • 34-2-0 (15 KOs)
- **8** **ALEJANDRO SANTIAGO**
  Mexico • 26-3-5 (13 KOs)
- **9** **KEITA KURIHARA**
  Japan • 16-7-1 (14 KOs)
- **10** **RYOSUKE NISHIDA**
  Japan • 5-0-0 (1 KO)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

- **C** **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA** RING
  Mexico • 43-3-0 (28 KOs)
- **1** **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
  Nicaragua • 51-3-0 (41 KOs)
- **2** **KAZUTO IOKA** WBO
  Japan • 29-2-0 (15 KOs)
- **3** **JESSE RODRIGUEZ** WBC
  Mexico • 17-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **4** **FERNANDO MARTINEZ** IBF
  Argentina • 14-0-0 (8 KOs)
- **5** **JOSHUA FRANCO** WBA
  U.S. • 18-1-2 (8 KOs)
- **6** **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
  Thailand • 50-6-1 (43 KOs)
- **7** **FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ JR.**
  Mexico • 36-5-1 (25 KOs)
- **8** **JERWIN ANCAJAS**
  Phil. • 33-2-2 (22 KOs)
- **9** **KOSEI TANAKA**
  Japan • 17-1-0 (10 KOs)
- **10** **ANDREW MOLONEY**
  Australia • 24-2-0 (16 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

- **C** **(VACANT)**
- **1** **JUNTO NAKATANI** WBO
  Japan • 23-0-0 (18 KOs)
- **2** **JULIO CESAR MARTINEZ** WBC
  Mexico • 18-2-0 (14 KOs)
- **3** **SUNNY EDWARDS** IBF
  U.K. • 18-0-0 (4 KOs)
- **4** **ARTEM DALAKIAN** WBA
  Ukraine • 21-0-0 (15 KOs)
- **5** **ANGEL AYALA LARDIZABAL**
  Mexico • 15-0-0 (7 KOs)
- **6** **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
  Puerto Rico • 21-4-0 (16 KOs)
- **7** **DAVID JIMENEZ**
  Costa Rica • 12-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **8** **RICARDO SANDOVAL**
  U.S. • 20-2-0 (15 KOs)
- **9** **JACKSON CHAUKE**
  S. Africa • 21-1-2 (15 KOs)
- **10** **FELIX ALVARADO**
  Nicaragua • 38-2-0 (33 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

- **C** **HIROTO KYOGUCHI** RING, WBA
  Japan • 16-0-0 (11 KOs)
- **1** **KENSHIRO TERAJI** WBC
  Japan • 19-1-0 (11 KOs)
- **2** **JONATHAN GONZALEZ** WBO
  Puerto Rico • 26-3-1 (14 KOs)
- **3** **HEKKIE BUDLER**
  S. Africa • 34-4-0 (10 KOs)
- **4** **ELWIN SOTO**
  Mexico • 19-3-0 (13 KOs)
- **5** **SIVENATHI NONTSHINGA** IBF
  S. Africa • 11-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **6** **MASAMICHI YABUKI**
  Japan • 14-4-0 (13 KOs)
- **7** **DANIEL MATELLON**
  Cuba • 13-0-2 (7 KOs)
- **8** **ESTEBAN BERMUDEZ**
  Mexico • 14-4-2 (10 KOs)
- **9** **CARLOS CANIZALES**
  Venezuela • 25-1-1 (19 KOs)
- **10** **SHOKICHI IWATA**
  Japan • 9-0-0 (6 KOs)

Canelo Alvarez retained his status as champ at 168 pounds with a points win over No. 1-rated middleweight Gennadiy Golovkin.

Unbeaten star Vergil Ortiz Jr. held his No. 5 position at 147 pounds with a TKO 9 win over unrated Michael McKinson.

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

- **C** **(VACANT)**
- **1** **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART** WBA
  Thailand • 24-0-0 (9 KOs)
- **2** **PETCHMANEE CP FRESHMART** WBC
  Thailand • 39-1-0 (23 KOs)
- **3** **MASATAKA TANIGUCHI** WBO
  Japan • 16-3-0 (11 KOs)
- **4** **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
  Thailand • 55-3-0 (19 KOs)
- **5** **WILFREDO MENDEZ**
  Puerto Rico • 17-2-0 (6 KOs)
- **6** **DANIEL VALLADARES** IBF
  Mexico • 26-3-1 (15 KOs)
- **7** **RENE MARK CUARTO**
  Phil. • 20-3-2 (11 KOs)
- **8** **GINJIRO SHIGEOKA**
  Japan • 8-0-0 (6 KOs)
- **9** **PEDRO TADURAN**
  Phil. • 14-4-1 (11 KOs)
- **10** **YUDAI SHIGEOKA**
  Japan • 5-0-0 (3 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED
RECORDS PROVIDED BY BOXREC.COM

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. The Ring's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another. 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders choose not to fight one another and No. 1 fights No. 3, that matchup could be for the Ring title if the Editorial Board deems No. 3 worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months, although injuries and certain other unforeseen circumstances could be taken into consideration; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

The Ring Editorial Board considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world and then decides collectively what changes will be made. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

WOMEN'S RATINGS

Through fights of Sept. 24, 2022

POUND FOR POUND

1 **KATIE TAYLOR**
Ireland • 21-0-0 (6 KOs)

2 **CLARESSA SHIELDS**
U.S. • 12-0-0 (2 KOs)

3 **AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 43-2-1 (30 KOs)

4 **MIKAELA MAYER**
U.S. • 17-0-0 (5 KOs)

5 **JESSICA MCCASKILL**
U.S. • 12-2-0 (5 KOs)

6 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)

7 **CHANTELLE CAMERON**
U.K. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)

8 **SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)

9 **SAVANNAH MARSHALL**
U.K. • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)

10 **YOKASTA VALLE**
Nicaragua • 26-2-0 (9 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 POUNDS

C **FRANCHON CREWS-DEZURN** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 8-1-0 (2 KOs)
1 **ELIN CEDERROOS**
Sweden • 8-1-0 (4 KOs)
2 **CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Germany • 28-1-0 (13 KOs)
3 **SHADASIA GREEN**
U.S. • 10-0-0 (9 KOs)
4 **JANINA NEUMANN**
Germany • 5-0-0 (5 KOs)
5 **RAQUEL MILLER**
U.S. • 12-0-0 (5 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 POUNDS

C **CLARESSA SHIELDS** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 12-0-0 (2 KOs)
1 **SAVANNAH MARSHALL** WBO
U.K. • 12-0-0 (10 KOs)
2 **CHRISTINA HAMMER**
Germany • 28-1-0 (13 KOs)
3 **EMA KOZIN**
Slovenia • 22-1-1 (12 KOs)
4 **FEMKE HERMANS**
Belgium • 13-4-0 (5 KOs)
5 **RAQUEL MILLER**
U.S. • 12-0-0 (5 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **MARIE EVE DICAIRE**
Canada • 18-1-0 (1 KO)
2 **NATASHA JONAS** WBC, WBO
U.K. • 12-2-1 (8 KOs)
3 **TERRI HARPER** WBA
U.K. • 13-1-1 (6 KOs)
4 **PATRICIA BERGHULT** WBC
Sweden • 15-1-0 (3 KOs)
5 **MARY SPENCER**
Canada • 7-0-0 (5 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 POUNDS

C **JESSICA MCCASKILL** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
U.S. • 12-2-0 (5 KOs)
1 **CECILIA BRAEKHUS**
Norway • 36-2-0 (9 KOs)
2 **LAYLA MCCARTER**
U.S. • 45-13-5 (11 KOs)
3 **VICTORIA BUSTOS**
Argentina • 23-7-0 (0 KOs)
4 **LOLITA MUZEYA**
Zambia • 17-1-0 (9 KOs)
5 **EWA PIATKOWSKA**
Poland • 16-1-0 (4 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 POUNDS

C **CHANTELLE CAMERON** RING, IBF, WBC
U.K. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
1 **KALI REIS** WBA, WBO
U.S. • 19-7-1 (5 KOs)
2 **SANDY RYAN**
U.K. • 4-1-0 (2 KOs)
3 **ERICA FARIAS**
Argentina • 27-6-0 (10 KOs)
4 **MARY MCGEE**
U.S. • 27-4-0 (15 KOs)
5 **OSHIN DERIEUW**
Belgium • 16-0-0 (6 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 POUNDS

C **KATIE TAYLOR** RING, IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO
Ireland • 21-0-0 (6 KOs)
1 **AMANDA SERRANO**
Puerto Rico • 43-2-1 (30 KOs)
2 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)
3 **ESTELLE MOSSELY**
Belgium • 10-0-0 (1 KOs)
4 **MIRIAM GUTIERREZ**
Spain • 14-2-0 (5 KOs)
5 **TERRI HARPER**
U.K. • 13-1-1 (6 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 POUNDS

C **MIKAELA MAYER** RING, IBF, WBO
U.S. • 17-0-0 (5 KOs)
1 **DELFINE PERSOON**
Belgium • 47-3-0 (19 KOs)
2 **ALYCIA BAUMGARDNER** WBC
U.S. • 12-1-0 (7 KOs)
3 **MAIVA HAMADOUCHE**
France • 22-2-0 (18 KOs)
4 **HYUN MI CHOI** WBA
South Korea • 19-0-1 (5 KOs)
5 **BO MI RE SHIN**
South Korea • 13-1-3 (7 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 POUNDS

C **AMANDA SERRANO** RING, IBF, WBC, WBO
Puerto Rico • 43-2-1 (30 KOs)
1 **ERIKA CRUZ HERNANDEZ** WBA
Mexico • 15-1-0 (3 KOs)
2 **SARAH MAHFOUD**
Denmark • 11-1-0 (3 KOs)
3 **ELINA TISSEN**
Germany • 25-2-0 (6 KOs)
4 **JELENA MRDJENOVICH**
Canada • 41-12-2 (19 KOs)
5 **MARCELA ACUNA**
Argentina • 51-8-2 (20 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **JACKIE NAVA**
Mexico • 39-4-4 (16 KOs)
2 **DINA THORSLUND**
Denmark • 18-0-0 (7 KOs)
3 **SEGOLENE LEFEBVRE** WBO
France • 16-0-0 (1 KO)
4 **YAMILETH MERCADO** WBC
Mexico • 19-3-0 (5 KOs)
5 **MAUREEN SHEA**
U.S. • 30-2-1 (13 KOs)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **DINA THORSLUND** WBO
Denmark • 18-0-0 (7 KOs)
2 **YULIHAN LUNA AVILA** WBC
Mexico • 24-3-1 (4 KOs)
3 **MARIANA JUAREZ**
Mexico • 55-11-4 (19 KOs)
4 **ZULINA MUNOZ**
Mexico • 53-4-2 (30 KOs)
5 **MELISSA ODDESSA PARKER**
U.S. • 6-0-0 (2 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **LOURDES JUAREZ** WBC
Mexico • 34-2-0 (4 KOs)
2 **DIANA FERNANDEZ**
Mexico • 26-4-1 (4 KOs)
3 **TAMAO OZAWA** WBO
Japan • 17-5-0 (6 KOs)
4 **MICAELA LUJAN** IBF
Argentina • 11-1-1 (3 KOs)
5 **ADELAIDA RUIZ**
U.S. • 12-0-1 (6 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 POUNDS

C **MARLEN ESPARZA** RING, WBA, WBC
U.S. • 13-1-0 (1 KOs)
1 **NAOKO FUJIOKA**
Japan • 19-3-1 (7 KOs)
2 **GABRIELA ALANIZ**
Argentina • 14-0-0 (6 KOs)
3 **ARELY MUCINO** WBO
Mexico • 31-3-2 (11 KOs)
4 **KENIA ENRIQUEZ**
Mexico • 24-1-0 (10 KOs)
5 **IBETH ZAMORA**
Mexico • 32-7-0 (12 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **SENIESA ESTRADA**
U.S. • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)
2 **EVELYN BERMUDEZ** IBF, WBO
Argentina • 17-0-1 (6 KOs)
3 **KIM CLAVEL** WBC
Canada • 16-0-0 (3 KOs)
4 **TSUNAMI TENKAI**
Japan • 28-13-1 (16 KOs)
5 **JESSICA NERY PLATA**
Mexico • 28-2-0 (3 KOs)

STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **SENIESA ESTRADA** WBA
U.S. • 22-0-0 (9 KOs)
2 **YOKASTA VALLE** IBF, WBO
Nicaragua • 26-2-0 (9 KOs)
3 **CHRISTINA RUPPRECHT** WBC
Germany • 11-0-1 (3 KOs)
4 **SARAH BORMANN**
Germany • 15-0-0 (7 KOs)
5 **ANABEL ORTIZ**
Mexico • 32-5-0 (4 KOs)

ATOMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 102 POUNDS

C **(VACANT)**
1 **MONSERRAT ALARCON** WBA
Mexico • 18-4-2 (0 KOs)
2 **FABIANA BYTYQI** WBC
Czech Rep. • 19-0-2 (5 KOs)
3 **MIKA IWAKAWA** IBF
Japan • 11-6-1 (3 KOs)
4 **YUKO KUROKI** IBF
Japan • 20-7-2 (9 KOs)
5 **ERI MATSUDA**
Japan • 5-1-1 (1 KO)

100-YEAR JOURNEY

Left to right: Sugar Ray Robinson, Muhammad Ali, Lennox Lewis and Canelo Alvarez.

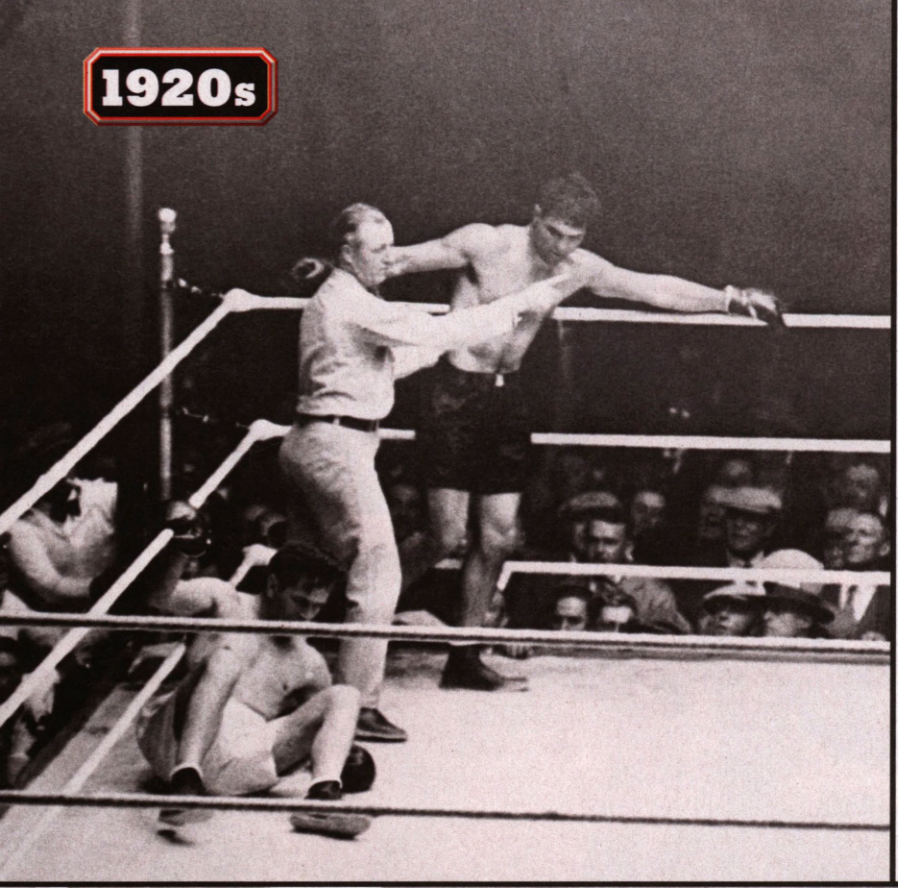
A PICTORIAL PANORAMA OF BOXING FROM THE TWENTIES TO THE PRESENT

By Doug Fischer

The Ring magazine has been in print since America's Jazz Age, and the monthly publication has witnessed every significant event and era in U.S. and world history that followed: The Great Depression, World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, the fall of the Soviet Union, the end of Apartheid in South Africa, the turn of the 21st century and the birth of the digital age.

The media through which the public follows boxing has evolved over time – from newspapers to radio to television to closed-circuit theater to cable and pay-per-view, and now streaming platforms – but photography spanned the decades and media, remaining an integral part of the sport's coverage.

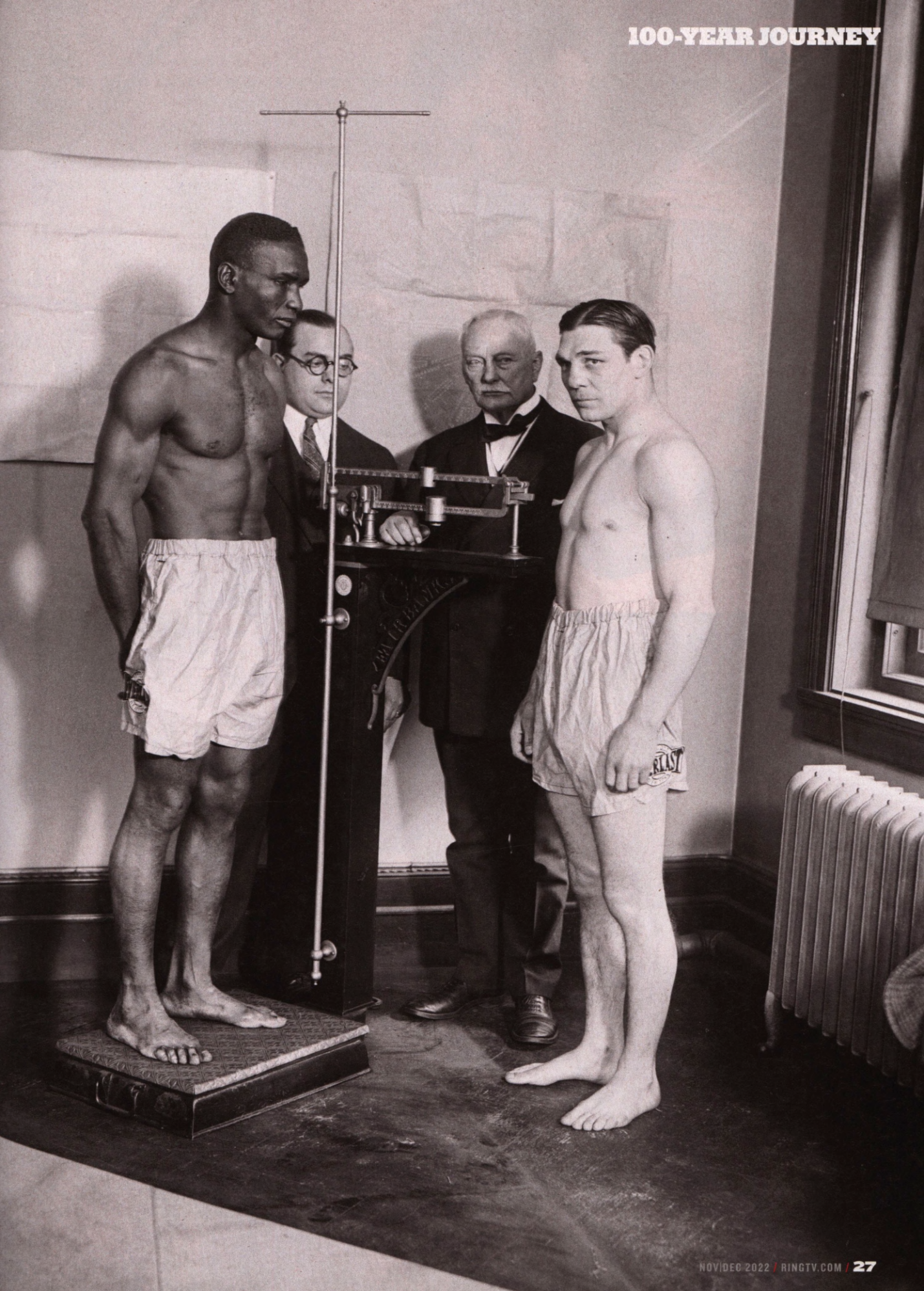
Photography captures the essence of prizefighting, as well as the spirit of the era, and it continues to captivate boxing fans just as it did 100 years ago.

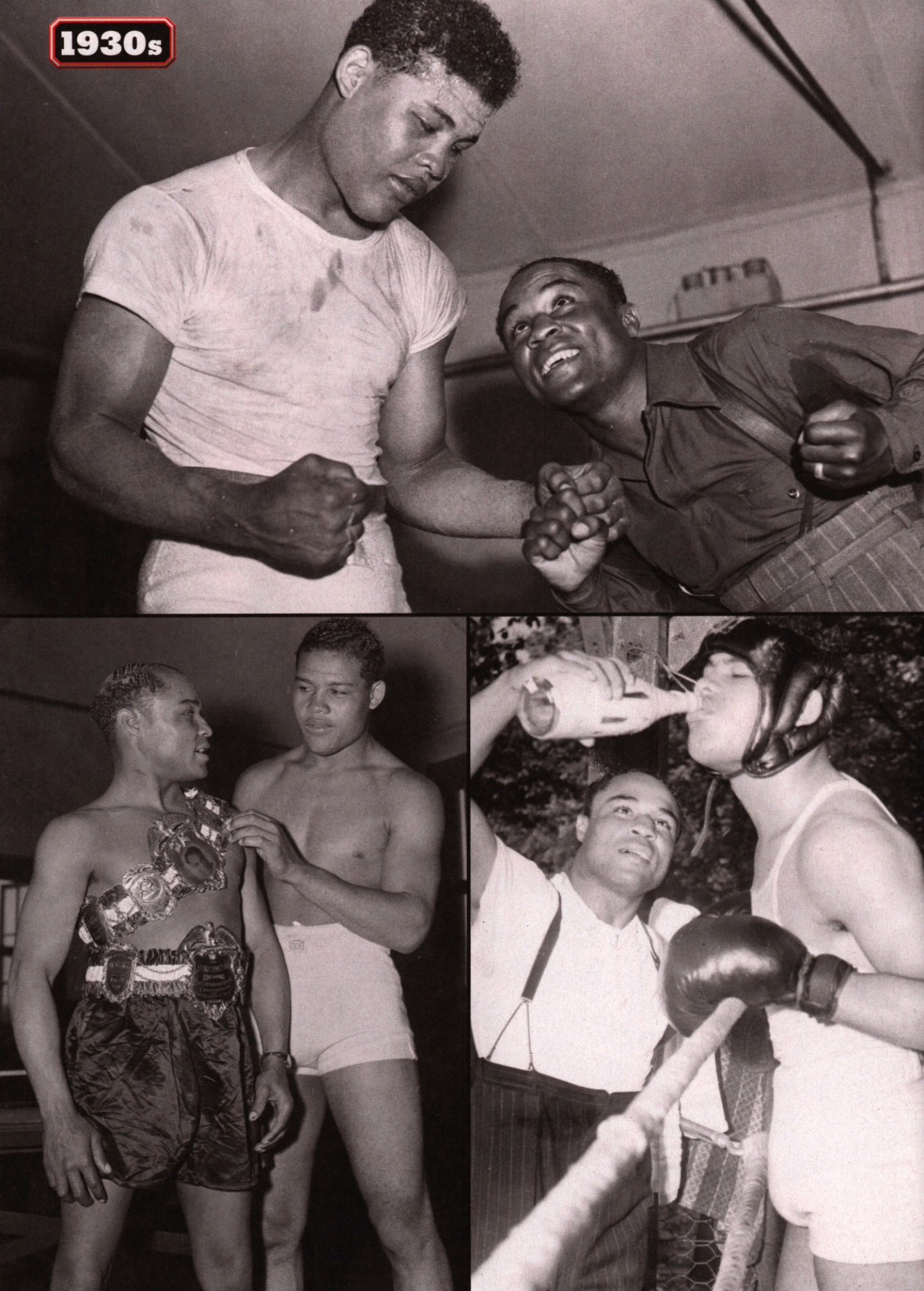


Heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey was the king of the ring and the box office, but he wasn't the only fistic icon of the Roaring Twenties. Middleweight champ Harry Greb took on all comers, did not draw the color line and beat the best light heavyweights and heavyweights, including Dempsey's eventual conqueror, Gene Tunney. Welterweight champ Mickey Walker, who unsuccessfully challenged Greb in 1925, was another amazing talent who bested the top-rated big men of the era.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Tiger Flowers. Benny Leonard. Fidel LaBarba. Tommy Loughran. Jimmy Slattery. Young Stribling. Pancho Villa.

From left: Demspey-Tunney II "Long Count." • Greb and Walker shaking hands at contract signing. • Greb and Tiger Flowers weigh in.

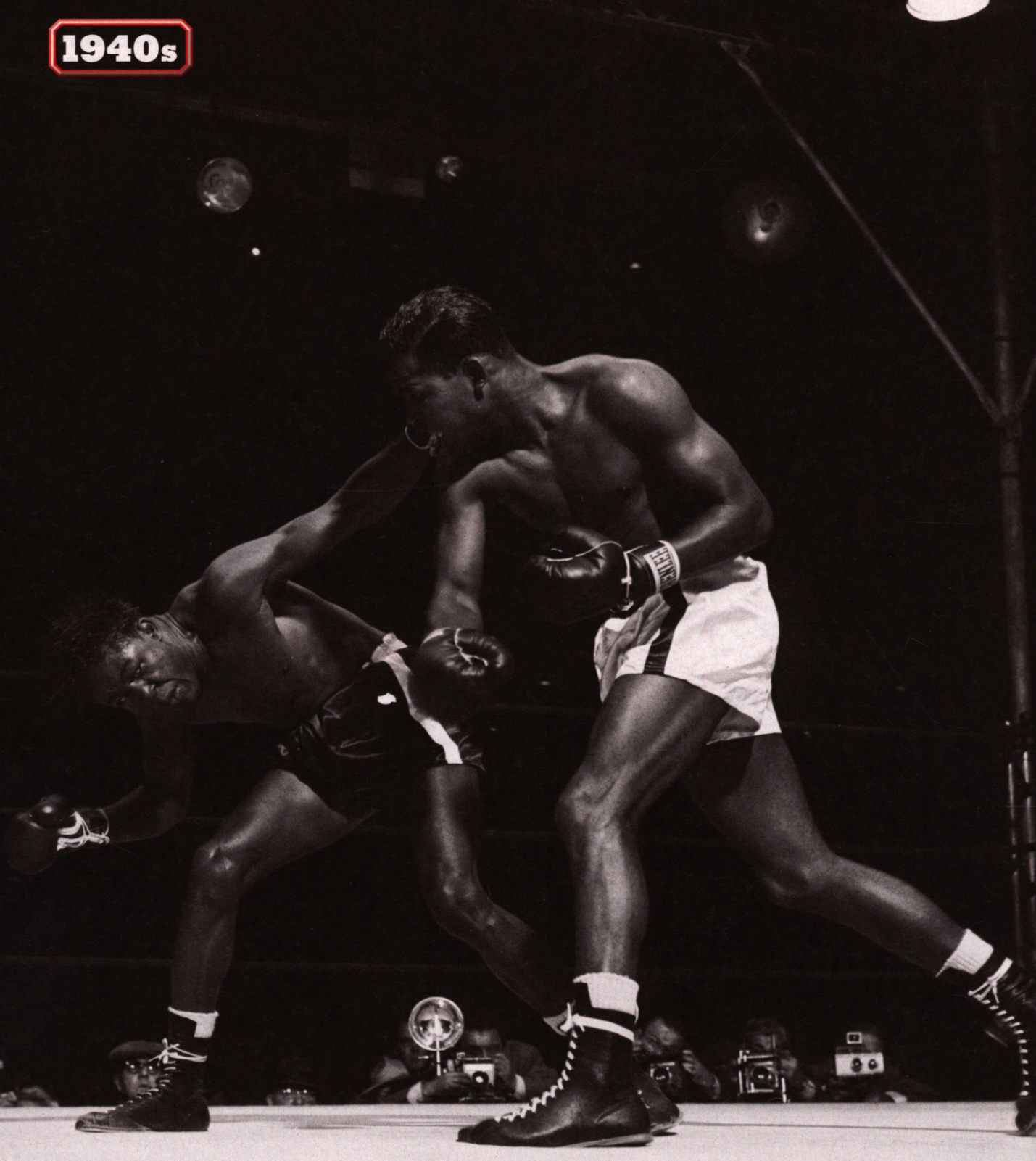


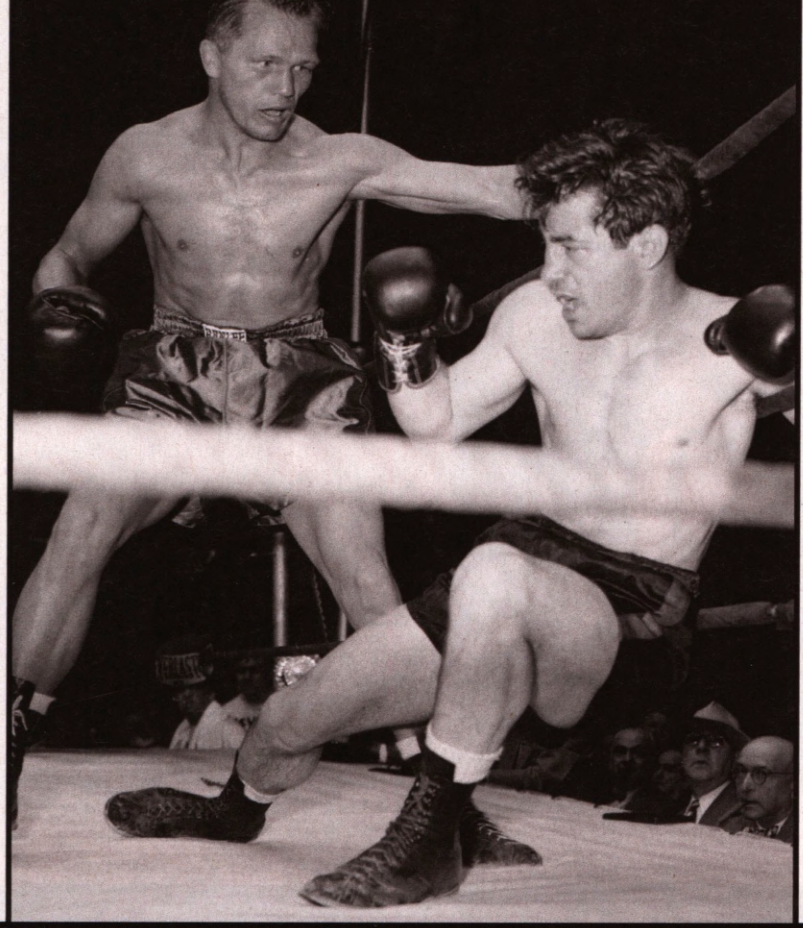

1930s

The 1930s witnessed the emergence of two African-American phenoms – Henry Armstrong and Joe Louis – both revered in the black community and celebrated by fans of all races due to their take-no-prisoners styles. Louis turned pro in 1934, and it took less than a year for the explosive heavyweight to become a top attraction. Armstrong did not possess Louis' one-punch power, but the indefatigable volume puncher overwhelmed his opposition. The year Louis won the title (1937), Armstrong fought 27 times, winning the featherweight crown en route to scoring 26 knockouts. In 1938, Armstrong won the welterweight and lightweight titles, simultaneously holding all three championships.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Lou Ambers. Max Baer. Tony Canzoneri. Kid Chocolate. Billy Conn. Jimmy McLarnin. Barney Ross. Max Schmeling. Jack Sharkey. Freddie Steele.

Counterclockwise from left: Armstrong visits Louis' training camp for the first Schmeling fight (1936) • Louis admires Armstrong's featherweight and welterweight Ring titles (1938) • Armstrong works Louis' corner during a public sparring session • More than 75,00 0 gather at Yankee Stadium for Louis-Schmeling II (1938) • Cover (February 1931) features Kid Chocolate and Young Stribling.



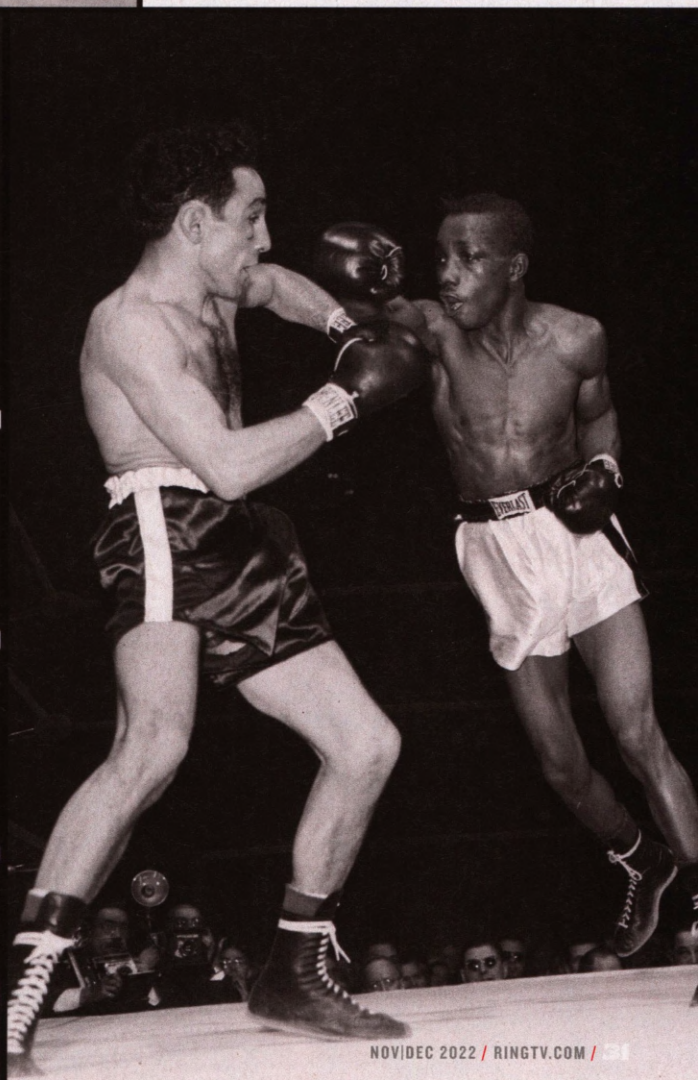


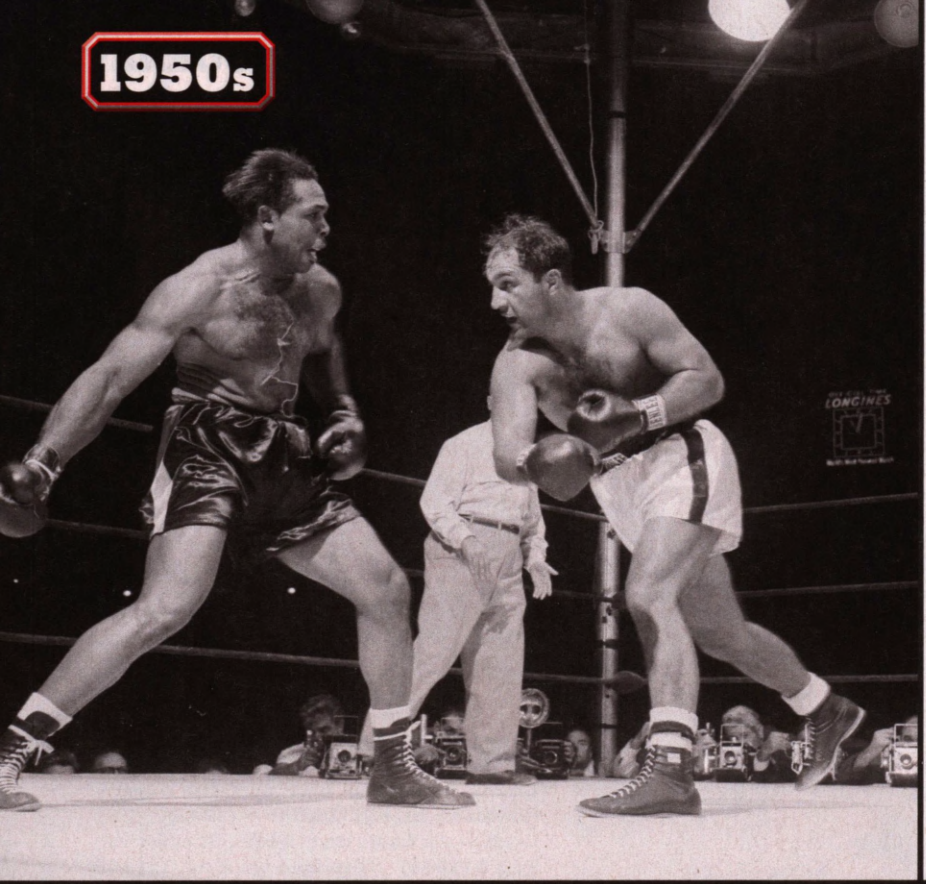
100-YEAR JOURNEY

New York City amateur sensation Sugar Ray Robinson turned pro in October 1940 and was a top contender – at lightweight and welterweight – by the end of 1941. By the end of 1942, he was The Ring's Fighter of the Year. Robinson set the frenetic pace and the standard for excellence in boxing's Golden Age, a decade that shined even though interrupted by World War II. He was joined by a group of boxing immortals that includes Willie Pep, Ezzard Charles, Ike Williams and crosstown rival Jake LaMotta.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Sammy Angott. Fred Apostoli. Marcel Cerdan. Rocky Graziano. Beau Jack. Bob Montgomery. Manuel Ortiz. Sandy Saddler. Tony Zale. Fritzie Zivic.

Counterclockwise from opposite page: Robinson vs. Kid Gavilan 1 (1948) • Cerdan vs. LaMotta (1949) • Saddler vs. Pep 2 (1949) • Graziano vs. Zale 3 (1948).

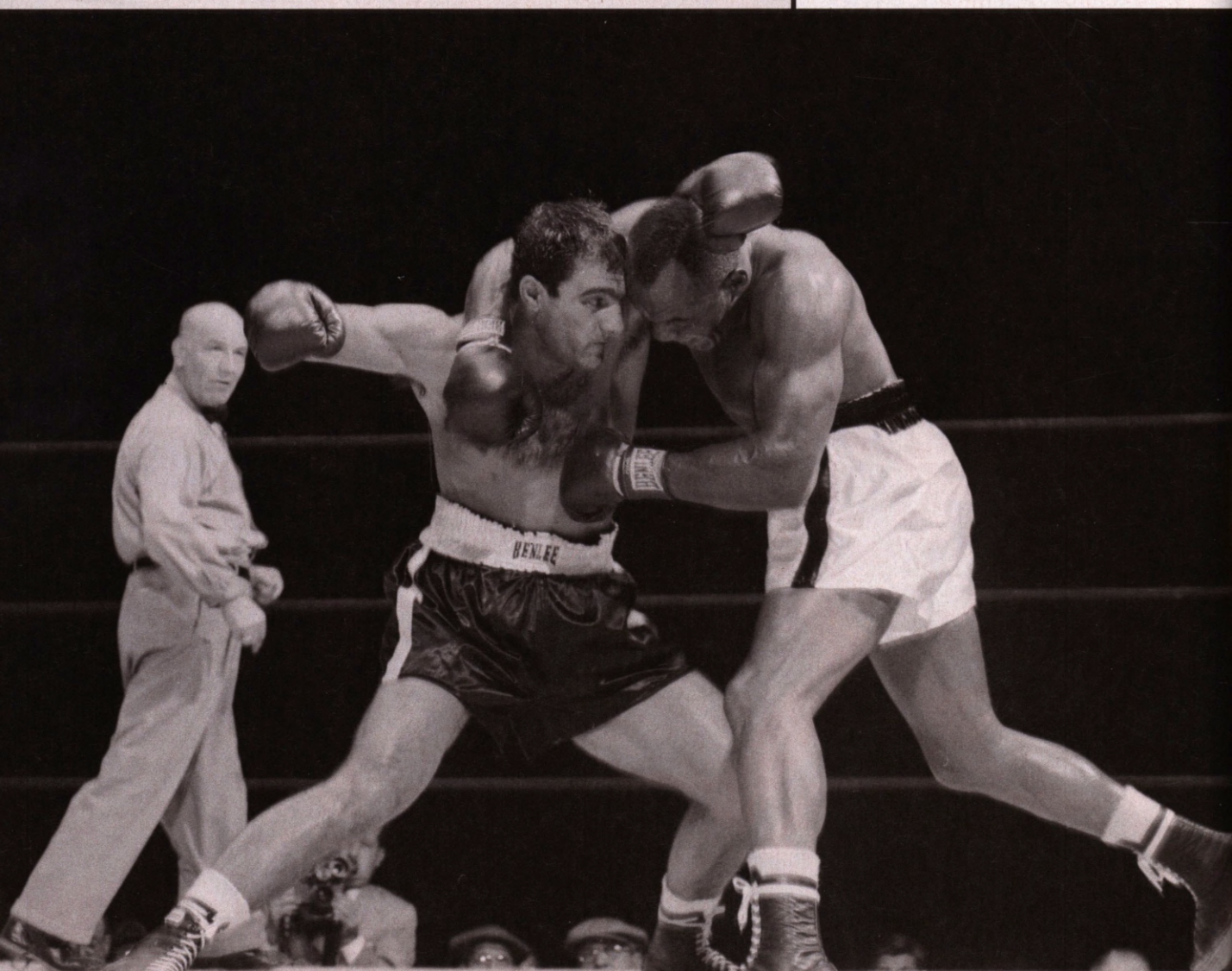




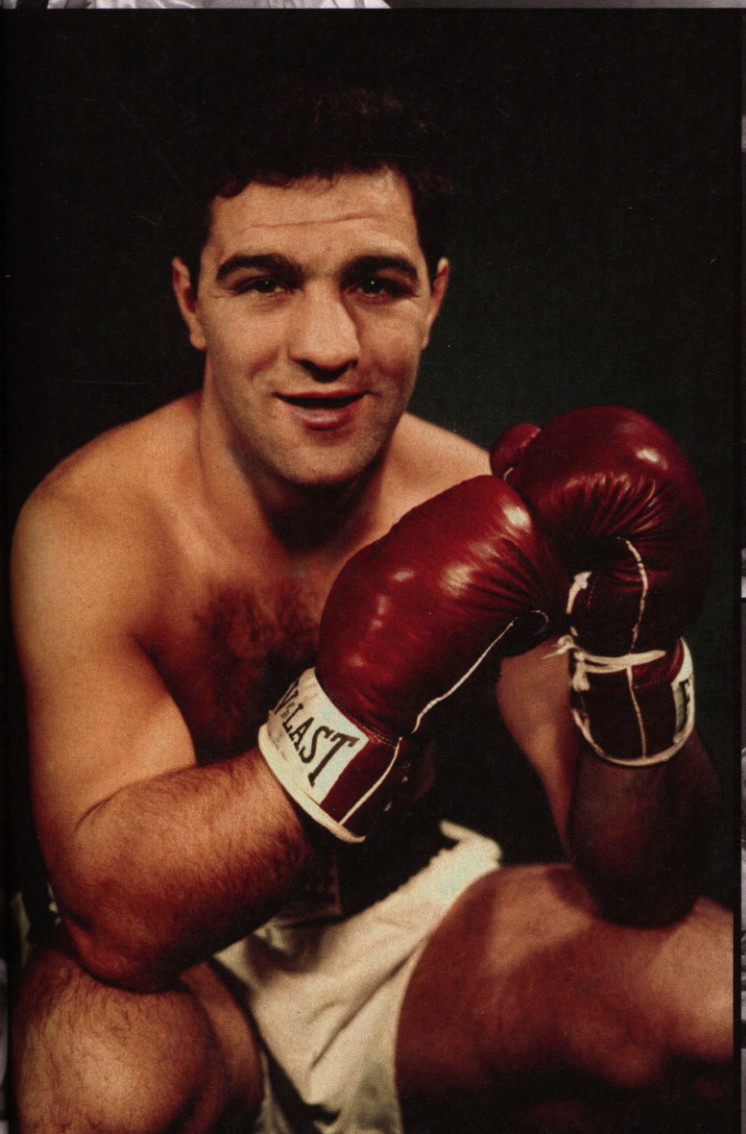
Rocky Marciano was the heavyweight champ and a blue-collar hero. Robinson's return to boxing following a three-year hiatus set up thrilling middleweight title fights with Carl "Bobo" Olson, Gene Fullmer and Carmen Basilio. Archie Moore finally got his long-sought-after (and much deserved) title shot after being denied for a decade.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Joe Brown. Kid Gavilan. Ingemar Johansson. Harold Johnson. Floyd Patterson. Jersey Joe Walcott.

Counterclockwise: Marciano vs. Moore (1955) • Marciano vs. Jersey Joe Walcott (1952) • Marciano portrait (1951) • Lightweight champ Joe Brown is awarded a trophy • Patterson vs. Johansson I • Harold Johnson (left) and Moore face-off before their 1954 title bout.



G & S
SPORTING GOODS
BENLEE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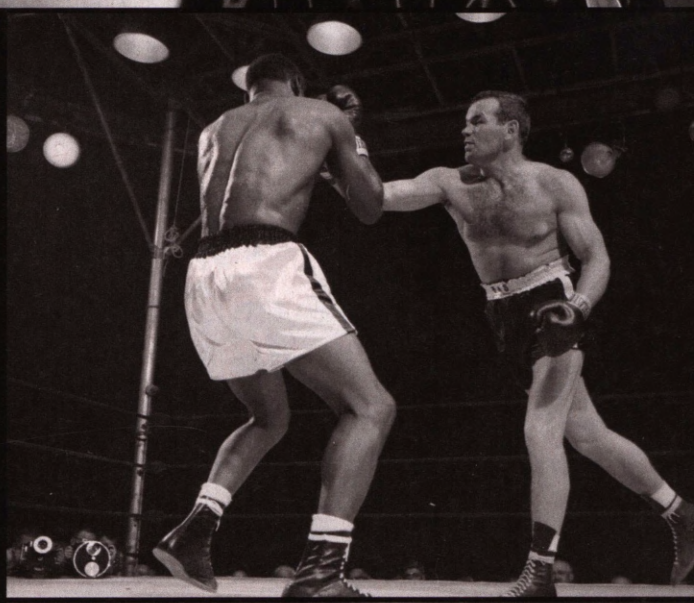
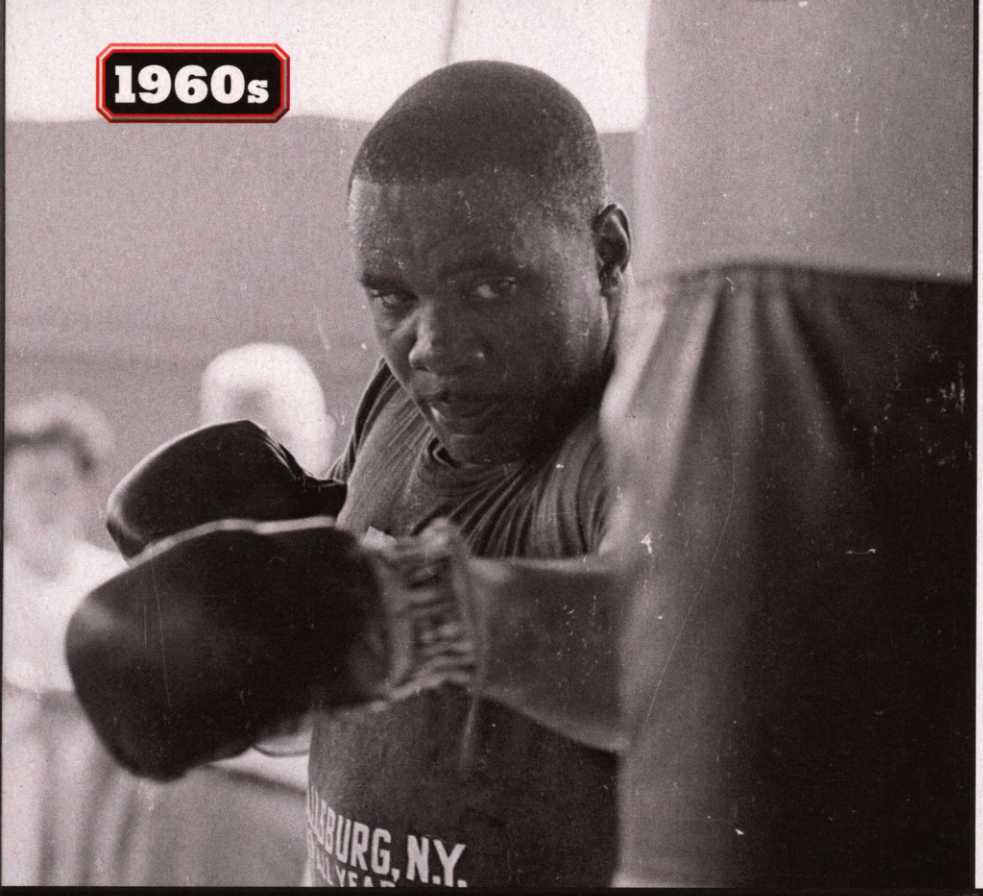


1960s

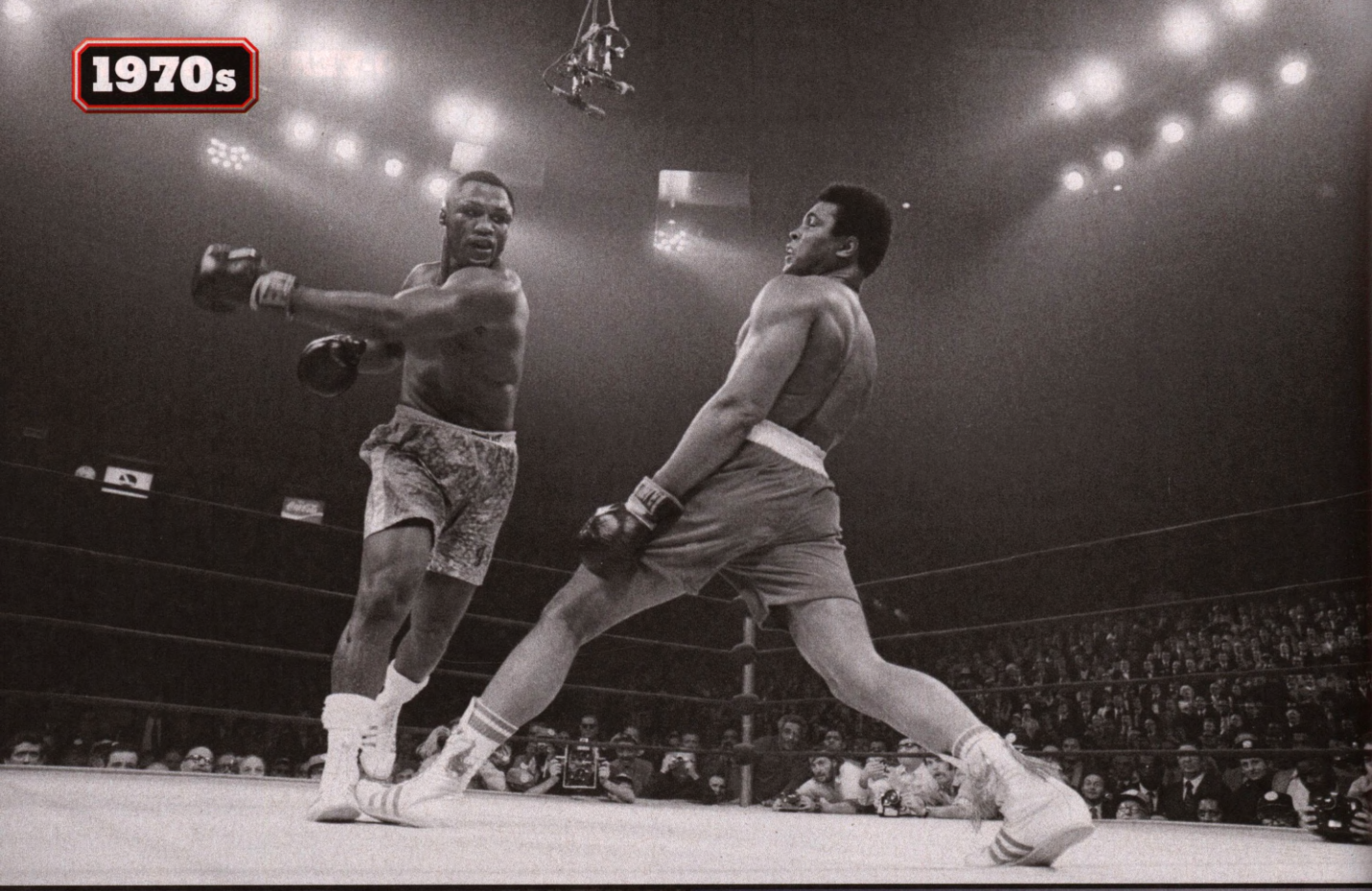


Cassius Clay, a charismatic light heavyweight Olympic champ, took the heavyweight division – and the world – by storm as he evolved into Muhammad Ali. Future archrival Joe Frazier, a 1964 Olympic gold medalist, blazed a path to the championship during Ali's politically charged exile from the sport during the tail end of the socially tumultuous decade.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Nino Benvenuti. Bob Foster. Emile Griffith. Fighting Harada. Eder Jofre. Sonny Liston. Dick Tiger. Jose Torres.

Counterclockwise: Sonny Liston on the heavy bag (1962) • Clay hyping Doug Jones fight (1963) • Frazier vs. Jerry Quarry 1 (1969).

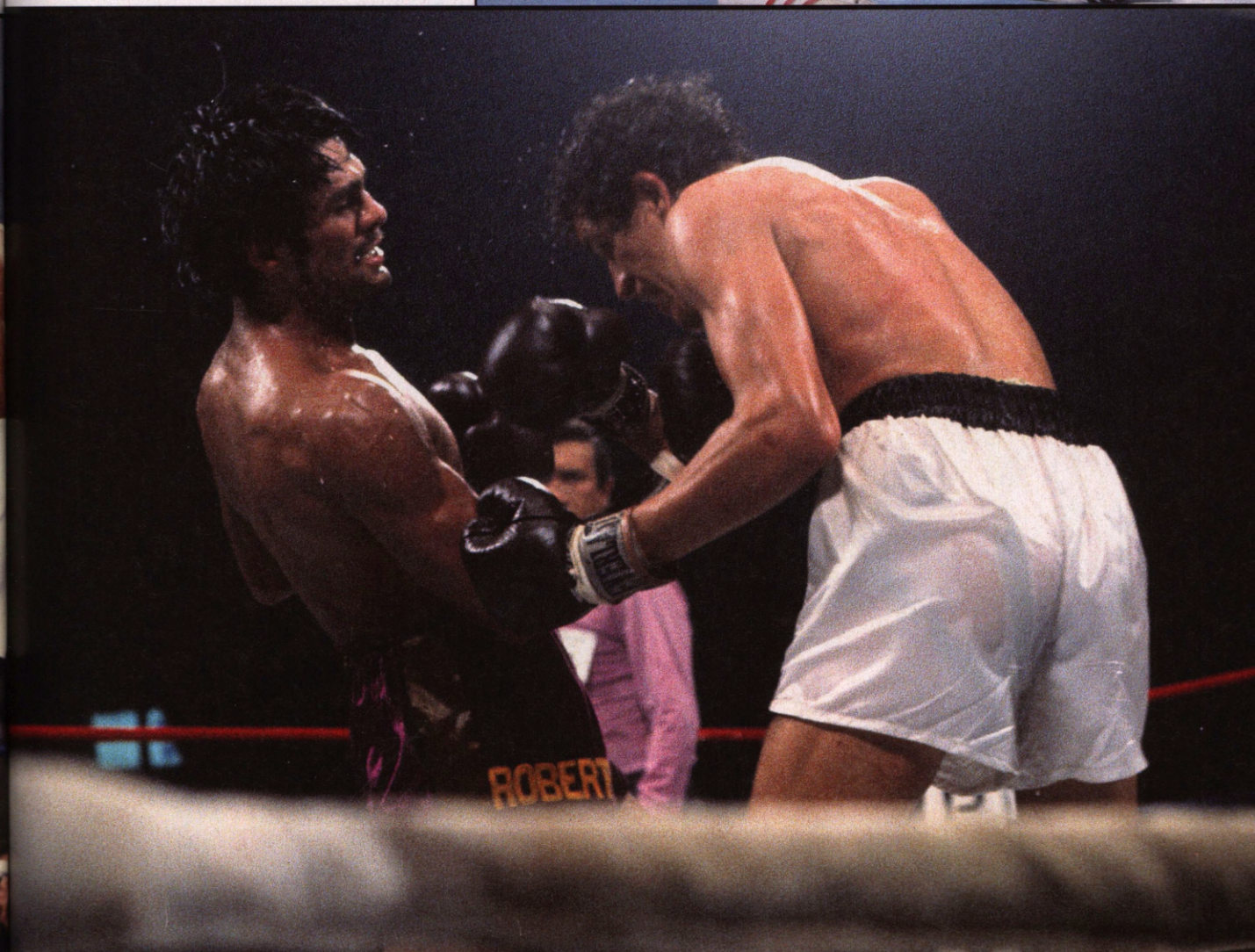
1970s

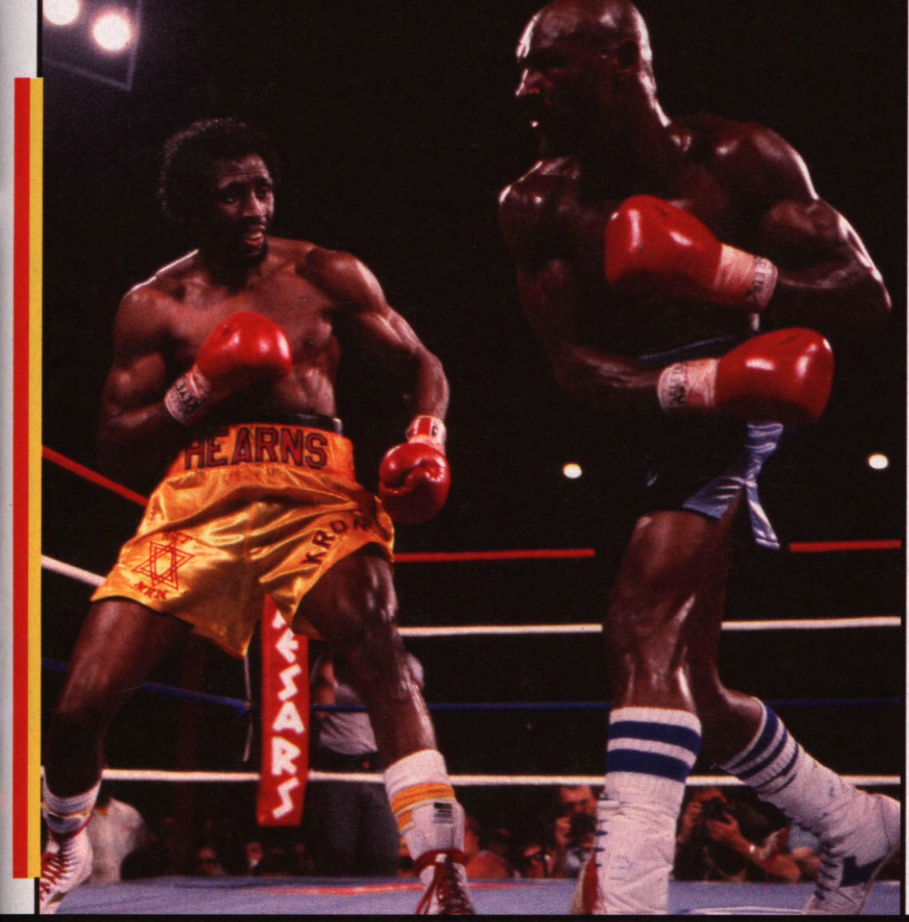


The heavyweights – led by Ali, Frazier, George Foreman and Ken Norton – dominated the sport, while sensational and fierce Latino champions such as Ruben Olivares, Roberto Duran, Jose Napoles and Carlos Monzon forged their legends in the lighter weight classes. Sugar Ray Leonard, the golden boy of the 1976 U.S. Olympic squad, proved there was a lot of substance to his flash by the end of the decade.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Alexis Arguello. Wilfredo Benitez. Miguel Canto. Antonio Cervantes. Bobby Chacon. Pipino Cuevas. Marvin Johnson. Danny Lopez. Matthew Saad Muhammad. Carlos Palomino. Carlos Zarate.

Counterclockwise: Ali vs. Frazier 1 (1971) • Norton vs. Larry Holmes (1978) • Benitez vs. Leonard (1979) • Duran vs. Edwin Viuet (1977) • Frazier vs. Foreman 1 (1973).



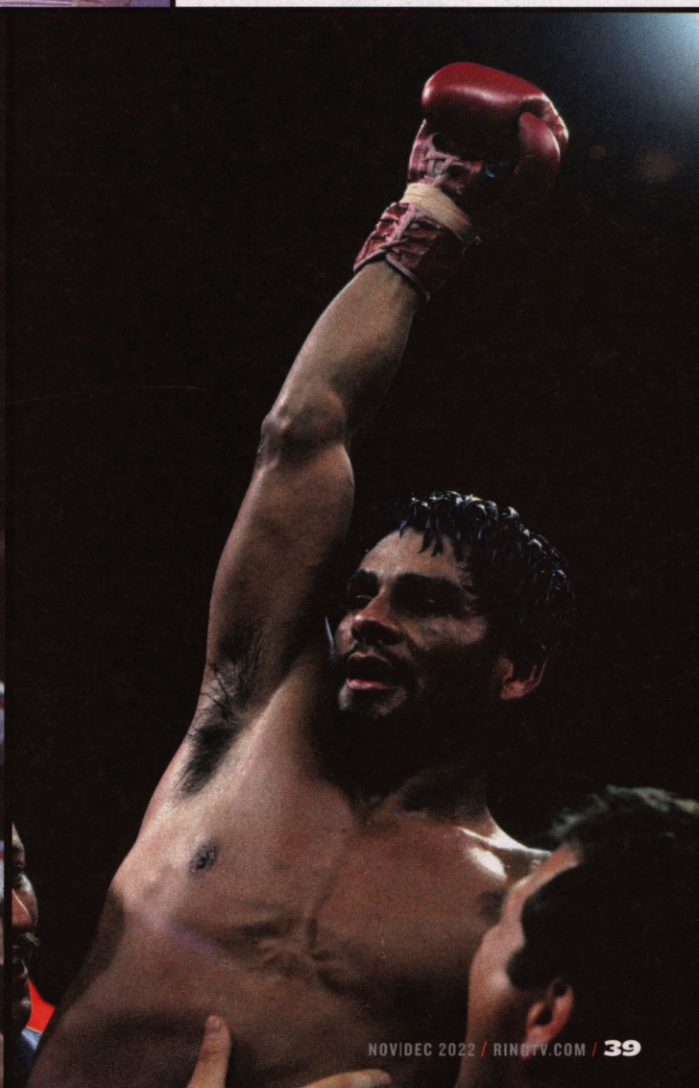


100-YEAR JOURNEY

The decade was bookended by two legendary heavyweight champions – the great Larry Holmes and a transcendent superstar in Mike Tyson – but it was defined by the nine-bout round robin between its Four Kings: Leonard, Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran and Marvelous Marvin Hagler. A future pantheon was spawned by the talented and ambitious 1984 U.S. Olympic squad.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Donald Curry. Hector Camacho. Orlando Canizales. Jeff Chandler. Wilfredo Gomez. Ray Mancini. Michael Nunn. Aaron Pryor. Edwin Rosario. Salvador Sanchez. Marlon Starling.

Counterclockwise from opposite page: Hagler vs. Duran (1983) • Tyson vs. Holmes (1988) • Leonard celebration (Duran 2, 1980) • Duran arm raised in victory (Leonard 1, 1980) • Hagler vs. Hearns (1985).



1990s

Pernell Whitaker, Roy Jones Jr. and Oscar De La Hoya all vied for the No. 1 spot in the mythical pound-for-pound rankings while the heavyweight division experienced another Golden Age thanks to the Evander Holyfield-Riddick Bowe trilogy, Mike Tyson's second title reign, the unlikely comebacks of George Foreman and Larry Holmes, the decade-long emergence of Lennox Lewis and a colorful cast of titleholders that included Michael Moorer, Oliver McCall, Ray Mercer and Tommy Morrison.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Nigel Benn. Michael Carbajal. Julio Cesar Chavez. Chris Eubank. Arturo Gatti. Humberto Gonzalez. Naseem Hamed. Shane Mosley. Terry Norris. James Toney. Felix Trinidad. Fernando Vargas.

Counterclockwise: Whitaker vs. Chavez (1993) • Norris vs. Leonard (1991) • Holyfield vs. Foreman (1991) • Jones Jr. vs. Toney (1994) • Gatti vs. Tracy H. Patterson 1 (1995).

adidas

BUDWEISER

MGM
GRAND

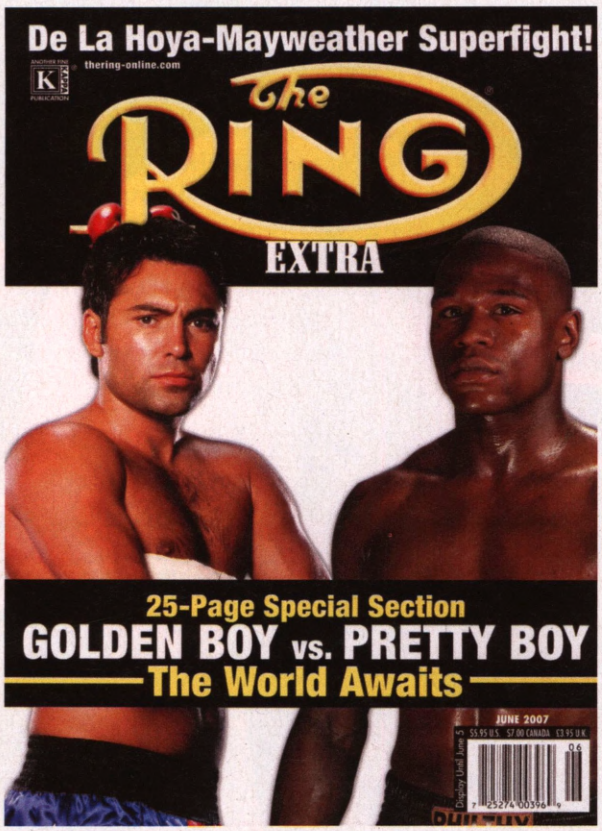
BARRERA

ISAAC

GRANT

THUNDER

GRANT
UNITED WE STAN



The first decade of the 21st century lacked a single transcendent superstar, but it was rich with great fights and rivalries – Diego Corrales-Jose Luis Castillo I, the Marco Antonio Barrera-Erik Morales trilogy, De La Hoya-Vargas, the Gatti-Micky Ward trilogy, Miguel Cotto-Antonio Margarito I, Manny Pacquiao-Juan Manuel Marquez I and II, Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez I, II and III – brilliant performances from aging veterans (Hopkins vs. Trinidad and Kelly Pavlik, Jones vs. John Ruiz, Toney vs. Vassiliy Jirov, Mosley vs. Margarito), and the emergence of Mayweather's "Money" persona.

OTHER STANDOUTS: Paulie Ayala. Joe Calzaghe. Joel Casamayor. Miguel Cotto. Nonito Donaire. Vernon Forrest. Ricky Hatton. Glen Johnson. Zab Judah. Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko. Cory Spinks. Johnny Tapia. Antonio Tarver.

Counterclockwise: Barrera vs. Morales 1 (2000) • Jones vs. Ruiz (2003) • Gatti vs. Ward 3 (2003) • Toney vs. Holyfield (2003) • Hopkins vs. Trinidad (2001) • De La Hoya vs. Vargas (2002) • Cover (June 2007) of De La Hoya-Mayweather preview.

2010s

TSESNABANK
TODAY. FOREVER
GGG
EXPO 2010
KGNT
KAZGIPRONEFTETRANS

CRÉDITO
Viana
Corona

The first half of the decade was defined by the rivalry between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao. The interchangeable pound-for-pound kings established themselves as the top two box-office and pay-per-view attractions in the sport while fanning the flames for their eventual record-breaking (and disappointing) 2015 showdown. The second half witnessed the rise of Canelo Alvarez and Gennadiy Golovkin, whose two middleweight title clashes delivered action and controversy, while British heavyweights Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury achieved stardom.

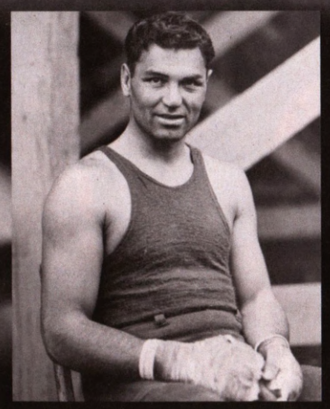
OTHER STANDOUTS: Tim Bradley. Terence Crawford. Juan Francisco Estrada. Danny Garcia. Roman Gonzalez. Naoya Inoue. Amir Khan. Vasiliy Lomachenko. Errol Spence. Keith Thurman. Oleksandr Usyk. Andre Ward. Deontay Wilder.

Counterclockwise: Golovkin vs. Marco Antonio Rubio (2014) • Mayweather vs. Canelo (2013) • Mayweather vs. Mosley (2010) • Pacquiao vs. Margarito (2010). • Hopkins vs. Pascal 2 (2011) • Bradley vs. Provodnikov (2013) • Klitschko vs. Fury (2015).

HOLDING THE LINE

THOSE FIGHTERS WHO CURRENTLY WEAR A **RING MAGAZINE BELT** ARE THE KEEPERS OF A TRADITION THAT GOES BACK A HUNDRED YEARS

By Brian Harty



The first Ring Champion Jack Dempsey.

In any sport that seeks to name a champion, lineage offers its own kind of truth. For boxing, you could take two people off the street, put them in a ring and call whoever wins "the champion." Or you and some of your associates could go behind closed doors and hammer out which matchup "makes sense" over cigars and scotch. But nothing compares to the powerful simplicity of "the man who beat the man."

We can't claim that any of The Ring's lineages are unbroken, except for junior bantamweight (and technically strawweight, since it hasn't yet started). The oldest of them (heavyweight) dates back to 1922, the year of the magazine's first publication, and all weight classes have been affected by retirements and migrations to other divisions as well as our own policy changes, a fighter's inactivity, drug test results and even death, as in the cases of Pancho Villa and Salvador Sanchez.

Whenever an interruption did occur, the backup plan was the ratings. A fight between the No. 1 and No. 2 guys could refill the throne, and back in the old days, with the frequency that boxers used to ply their trade, it usually didn't take long. So while the breaks were unavoidable, the

system did a good job of keeping the title with "the man." And as a result, the Ring belt was widely seen as the true champion's ID badge.

In addition to the minor lapses, however, any division that had a champion in the late 1980s was affected when London Publishing acquired the magazine and, for murky reasons, decided to suspend the championship practice altogether. This lasted for more than a decade, which not only stomped out every line of succession but also deprived many deserving fighters of the chance to win the belt. The story by Cliff Rold that follows this one seeks to recognize those fighters who fell into the gap.

The rise of network-backed stars and a focus on massive paydays – along with turf wars between promotional companies and overprotective managers – means that the top fighters fight less and less, and that has made it harder and harder to maintain a championship lineage in any given weight class. At the writing of this story, eight of the 17 men's divisions and seven of the 15 female divisions rated by The Ring (super middleweight down to atomweight) are without a champion.

We honor the ones that we have, though. They carry the tradition and truth that The Ring has endeavored to uphold.

THE MEN

HEAVYWEIGHT: OLEKSANDR USYK

Four years ago, with giants like Tyson Fury, Anthony Joshua and Deontay Wilder roaming the misty heavyweight landscape, you probably wouldn't have believed that a sub-200-pound Ukrainian was destined to claim the most glamorous crown in boxing. Back then, Oleksandr Usyk was often compared to two fighters: Vasiliy Lomachenko – due to their shared homeland, trainer (Lomachenko's father) and mutual mastery of tricky defense, fluid footwork and almost whimsically innovative punching angles – and Evander Holyfield. Mentions of the latter weren't just because Usyk had set a new record by winning a cruiserweight title in his 10th pro bout (as opposed to Holyfield's 12th), or that he was challenging the three decade-old gospel that Holyfield was the division's greatest of all time. It was also because of his stated intention to follow the most Holyfield-esque path of all – up to heavyweight.

In October 2019, Usyk left his undisputed champion status at cruiserweight behind and put on 15 pounds to face Chazz Witherspoon. The American could do nothing to avoid getting scorched in the ensuing laser storm and was stopped in seven rounds. Usyk was unable to put the bigger man on the canvas, however, and that led to some skeptical muttering in the Twitterverse. Against the even larger and more dangerous Derek Chisora, Usyk won a unanimous decision but looked vulnerable in the face of heavyweight power. His skills were irreproachable, but Usyk's size was looking like a potential problem.

And then in September 2021, Usyk went supernova with an odds-defying victory over unified titleholder Anthony Joshua, outworking and demoralizing the super heavyweight Olympic gold medalist with a blend

of transcendent agility and accuracy that kept the challenger both in the action and out of harm's way. Many chalked it up to overconfidence and poor planning on the Brit's part, but Joshua came into the rematch better prepared and was picked apart again, his more patient, bodyshot-conscious, reach-appropriate game plan wilting into recklessness as Usyk figured him out and adjusted.

In beating Joshua the second time, Usyk won the championship and joined The Ring's oldest lineage. On top of that, he proved in both fights that he could take a true heavyweight's punch – or at least a few of them – and was rewarded by being named the No. 1 pound-for-pound fighter on the planet. Some will never fully accept him as heavyweight champion until he defeats Fury, who made the title available by retiring – a situation that approximately zero people in boxing believed would last more than a year (in fact, Fury has said one reason he walked away was so he could return and win the belt for a third time). But Usyk is now and forever connected through time to an incredible list of 25 names that goes back to Jack Dempsey and a time when the heavyweight champion in boxing was the most famous athlete on the planet.

All 25 of those names are iconic within this sport, and most would be recognized even by people who know nothing about it: Dempsey, James "Cinderella Man" Braddock, Joe Louis, Rocky Marciano, George Foreman, Mike Tyson and of course Muhammad Ali, each woven into the zeitgeist of their day. At the risk of laying it on too thick, The Ring's heavyweight lineage is a tool for conversing with the past 100 years, particularly in the United States but perhaps the whole world as well.

CRUISERWEIGHT: JAI OPETAIA

The Ring championship at 200 pounds dates back to 1984 and Carlos De Leon, who would lose it to Alonzo Ratliff in 1985 and then regain it the following year against Bernard Benton. Soon after that, however, our magazine took the view that weight classes had become too numerous and withdrew recognition of cruiserweight, thus folding everyone over 175 pounds back into the heavyweight mix. This change carried into The Great Championship Embargo, which ran from the late '80s until the early 21st century. Cumulatively, these policies resulted in an 18-year blackout for the cruiserweight division.

The most significant consequence of the broken lineage is that Evander Holyfield never got to wear the belt. The pinnacle of his cruiserweight reign, which he appropriately capped off as undisputed champion with an eighth-round stoppage of De Leon, took place while The Ring considered him a heavyweight.

With the championship reinstated in 2005, new names were gradually added to the list: Jean-Marc Mormeck, O'Neil Bell, David Haye, Tomasz Adamek, Yoan Pablo Hernandez, Oleksandr Usyk. Usyk's decision to go big-game hunting didn't leave much in the way of blockbuster matchups – gatekeepers abounded and promising talents like Lawrence Okolie and Richard Riakporhe were still works in progress – but Mairis Briedis' win

over Yuniel Dorticos in September 2020 crowned an experienced, solid boxer with power in both hands.

It didn't seem that Briedis was in too deep, then, as he flew to Australia to face an undefeated but unranked and relatively unknown local lad by the name of Jai Opetaia. Australians were about to get a new hero, though. Despite the home-ring advantage, Opetaia's victory was in no way controversial; he outboxed the 37-year-old Latvian early and held him off during a championship-round rally, and he showed incredible fortitude by doing it with a jaw that had nearly developed a second set of hinges. Just like that, the cruiserweight division got an invigorating slap.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: CANELO ALVAREZ

As a young tweener division that hadn't gained much steam when The Ring's hiatus from handing out belts began, the story at 168 is a short but exasperating one. Joe Calzaghe, who had already defended his WBO belt a staggering 17 times and was 33 years old in March 2006, took on 28-year-old knockout specialist Jeff "Left Hook" Lacy in Manchester and absolutely shredded the favored Floridian to become The Ring's inaugural super middleweight champion. Calzaghe would keep the title through his 2007 victory over Mikkel Kessler, after which he gave up the title and migrated to 175 pounds, where he also would win the championship by beating Bernard Hopkins.

Three years of vacancy passed before smooth operator Andre Ward beat Carl Froch in the Super Six World Boxing Classic to refill the throne. Ward kept it for two defenses and was then stripped for going too long without a meaningful opponent, plunging the division into another three-and-a-half years of darkness. The mantle was once again picked up in late 2018 by Callum Smith, who memorably knocked out countryman George Groves in the World Boxing Super Series final.

In the meantime, Canelo Alvarez was jumping all over the scale, winning a bout at 168, defending his unified championship at 160 and grabbing a title at 175 – in that order in three consecutive fights. A six-inch height advantage for Smith? Not a problem. Canelo easily dominated the 12-round fight with a strong jab, signature bodyshots and wicked right hands of all shapes, thus becoming the division's fourth champion and the first to actually take it from someone.

Canelo ruthlessly defended his title with stoppage wins over Avni Yildirim, Billy Joe Saunders and Caleb Plant, picking up undisputed champ status in the process, before a much more civilized – nah, let's just call it pretty forgettable – trilogy encounter with Gennadiy Golovkin in his most recent fight. Regardless of where Canelo goes next – up for Dmitry Bivol or Gilberto Ramirez, down for a Jermall Charlo showdown or sideways for David Benavidez – this appears to be Canelo's most comfortable weight, and he is still very much in control.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHT: JERMELL CHARLO

The first championship at 154 pounds was claimed by Oscar Albarado in June 1974 with a 15th-round knockout of WBA/WBC titleholder Koichi Wajima in Japan. Wajima reclaimed his belts in the rematch, lost them to Yuh Jae-Doo and then took them back in their rematch. It was only after Spain's Jose Duran knocked out Wajima that the Ring championship was on the line outside of Japan, and it wasn't until 1981 that the belt landed in the U.S.

Sugar Ray Leonard was already

the champion at welterweight, but he decided to put on a few pounds for an "easy" fight at 154 and wound up in a slugfest with undefeated Ugandan Ayub Kalule, who had taken the titles from Masashi Kudo in, yep, Japan. Why did Leonard decide to go toe-to-toe with a man he probably could've outboxed without many issues? Regardless of the reason...

Dear Mr. Leonard,

Thank you for deciding to go toe-to-toe with Ayub Kalule.

Yours truly, The Fans

After Leonard pounded the belts from Kalule's waist with unexpected violence, he attended to some Four Kings business at welterweight and middleweight, allowing another member of the quartet, Thomas Hearns, to take a turn on the throne until 1986. Hearns vacated shortly before the long winter began.

In 2002, the lineage was born again in the bad blood of Oscar De La Hoya vs. Fernando Vargas, and the next 18 years saw some pretty large gaps as Shane Mosley, Winky Wright, Canelo Alvarez and Floyd Mayweather Jr. each enjoyed brief reigns. The championship languished in a void for five years after Mayweather was stripped for inactivity, then reemerged emphatically with Jermell Charlo's eighth-round knockout of power-punching spoiler Jeison "Banana" Rosario.

Despite their different styles, both Jermell and his twin brother, Jermall, have been expected to reach the top tier for years, so it's no surprise to see the family name here. Jermell has been seen as the "more careful" boxer of the two, but he has plenty of highlight-reel knockouts that prove the power is there to be summoned. The issue with him is that his fight-by-fight narrative has been something like "He's a future pound-for-pound great! ... Or is he? ... OK, he's a pound-for-pounder ... Or is ... Pound-for-pound!" With DNA-blessed challengers like Sebastian Fundora (super lanky) and Tim Tszyu (super father) lurking, we'll see where the pendulum swings next.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: JOSH TAYLOR

The Tartan Tornado is still Protector of the Realm at 140 pounds, and some would call him fortunate to be so after a controversial win over Jack Catterall in his most recent fight, but Josh Taylor's place in a line that stretches back to the Jazz Age is well-earned.

The lineage tried to take root that far back, anyway. Jack "Kid" Berg was the first significant champion, but he only held the distinction for a short while before the division fell out of favor in the early 1930s. It wasn't until Duilio Loi's victory over Eddie Perkins in 1962 that the lineage was reactivated. That turned out to be Loi's last fight, however, so things didn't really get going until Perkins beat Roberto Cruz the following year. Then it looked more like a proper lineage, including a stint by Wilfred Benitez sandwiched between Antonio Cervantes' two productive reigns.

The division then had several dominant rulers – Aaron Pryor, Kostya Tszyu, Ricky Hatton, Danny Garcia, Terence Crawford – before getting to Taylor. (Manny Pacquiao also made an appearance, but only as a waystation between knocking out Hatton and launching his welterweight era against Miguel Cotto.)

By the final of the World Boxing Super Series in 2019, Taylor had prevailed in a three-fight series against Viktor Postol, Ryan Martin and Ivan Baranchyk to reach No. 2 on The Ring's 140-pound ratings. The top dog was Regis Prograis, whose speed and honed precision

were expected to challenge the plenty-quick but more aggressive Scotsman. And they did, in a great way. Taylor simply wouldn't be turned away from his goal and continued to pressure and outwork Prograis in a fantastic scrap that ended with a majority decision for The Tornado. He has made three successful defenses since then, including the split decision that most watchers felt should've gone to Catterall, and Taylor is eager to prove that it was just a bad night. He has even fractured his cherished status as the only undisputed champion from Scotland besides Ken Buchanan, vacating most of his sanctioning-body titles to avoid any mandatory opponents who would distract him from a rematch.

LIGHTWEIGHT: DEVIN HANEY

Besides welterweight, the lightweight lineage contains more fighters (39) than any other, and they include titans: Benny Leonard, Tony Canzoneri, Lou Ambers, Henry Armstrong, Ike Williams, Carlos Ortiz, Roberto Duran, Alexis Arguello, Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker ... so many. Sadly, Joe Gans died 14 years before Leonard inaugurated the championship in 1924.

In the 21st century, the Ring lightweight belt was the first of three to be held by Terence Crawford (who filled the vacancy with a UD over Raymundo Beltran), and later seemed like the unassailable property of Vasiliy Lomachenko (who took it from Jorge Linares) before the Ukrainian's upset loss to Teofimo Lopez. Lopez was then upset by George Kambosos Jr., which brings us to Haney.

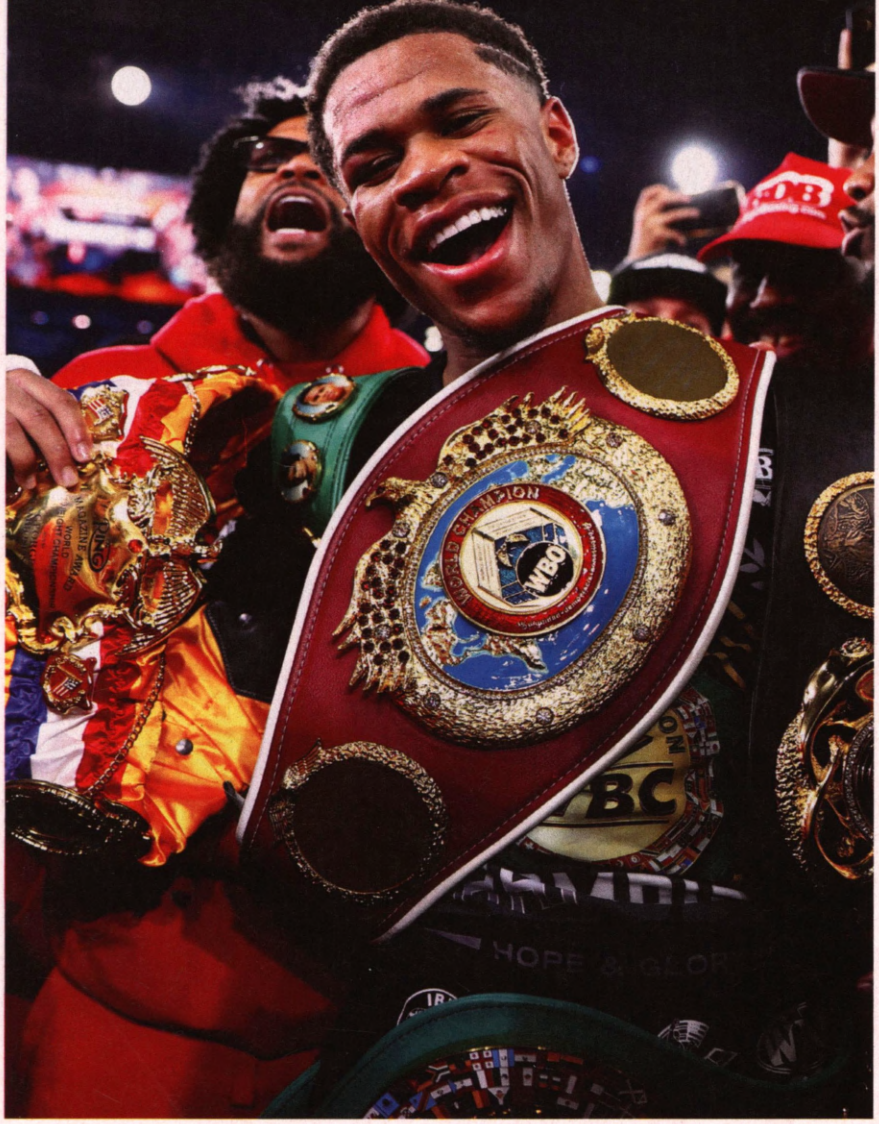
On top of superb reflexes and footwork, Haney's viper-strike hand speed makes his reach seem about a foot longer than it really is, and he has the ability to punch, crouch and punch again so quickly that fighting him is like a game of Whac-A-Mole in which the mole hits back. He's a very impressive fighter. And Haney agrees. When he didn't get onto The Ring's pound-for-pound list after a unanimous decision win over Kambosos that was a bit ho-hum only because of the gap in class, Haney announced that he was dumping the belt. So is he still the champion? On paper, yes.

It's OK. Haney is very ambitious, and he lives in the orbit of Floyd Mayweather Jr., whose gravity has a reality-warping effect. And something that would-be moguls of today might forget is that Mayweather was already a five-division titleholder when he changed his name to "Money." A Twitter conniption isn't going to keep us from recognizing somebody as the legitimate king, though.

BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE

Just as parents love all their children but after a few drinks will admit to having a favorite, I will state here that Naoya Inoue is probably this magazine's favorite champion. Ever since he appeared on the cover of our February 2019 issue, he has done nothing but exceed our expectations, seeking out new challenges, destroying his opponents and then humbly promising to do better next time. Nowhere was that mindset more evident than in his June rematch with Nonito Donaire, when he utterly demolished "The Filipino Flash" in less than two rounds to silence any talk about him being "overrated" after a tougher-than-expected first encounter in late 2019. The win put Inoue on top of The Ring's pound-for-pound list until Usyk displaced him two-and-a-half months later.

Except for a defense that is far from impregnable, there's not much



to criticize about "The Monster." He's technically brilliant, fast, accurate, probably one of the best body-punchers of all time and his power is from another planet – a very, very cold and frightening planet – and as I type this I'm starting to wonder why I sided with Usyk.

One thing not in question is whether Inoue is worthy of the lineage. It started in March 1924 at Madison Square Garden with Abe Goldstein, who would lose it to Eddie Martin in the same arena six days before Christmas of that year. Panama Al Brown would wear the belt from 1931-35, eventually losing it to Baltasar Sangchili on points in Spain. In the 1940s, the division had its most dominant champion in Manuel Ortiz, who took the belt from Lou Salica and held on for two reigns that added up to almost eight years (interrupted by two months in 1947 when he suffered and then quickly avenged a loss to Harold Dade), before South African hero Vic Toweel made history in 1950 by beating Ortiz in front of 20,000 fans in Johannesburg.

The championship was picked up at the start of the Swinging Sixties by the great Eder Jofre, who would go on a 10-knockout streak (or 17, if you include the title-winner and the six fights preceding that) before underdog Masahiko "Fighting" Harada had his own Toweel moment in Japan, winning a hard-fought decision and then repeating in the rematch – the only two losses in Jofre's 78-fight-career. Ruben Olivares would take the belt into the '70s with a pair of reigns, while his countryman Alfonso Zamora and Panama's Jorge Lujan would rule in the middle of the decade with five defenses apiece. Philadelphia's own Jeff Chandler would defend it nine times in the '80s.

After almost 20 years without a champion, the bantamweight division once again turned to Japan thanks to Shinsuke Yamanaka, who filled the vacancy by knocking out Anselmo Moreno in 2016. And finally, in 2019, with the championship vacant once again due to some "unprofessionalism" on the part of Luis Nery, the semifinal of the World Boxing Super Series featured our February 2019 cover star against undefeated Puerto Rican Emmanuel Rodriguez. Inoue was already a two-division titleholder and was in just his second fight at 118 pounds, but the story was the same. He dropped Rodriguez three times in the second round – the first time with a right to the body-left to the nose combo, then twice more with left hooks to the liver for the win.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHT: JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA

So far, the Ring championship at 115 pounds has been a two-man show, but it easily could've gone another way. Consider this: The division's top 5 in early March 2017 was Naoya Inoue at No. 1 (also No. 10 pound-for-pound at the time), Roman Gonzalez at No. 2 (and No. 1 pound-for-pound), Carlos Cuadras at No. 3, Srisaket Sor Rungvisai at No. 4 and Juan Francisco Estrada at No. 5. That's 10 possible matchups, all with Fight of the Year potential. The key was Inoue.

Sor Rungvisai vaulted to No. 2 when he upset Roman Gonzalez (and a lot of fans) by majority decision, and he remained there after knocking out Chocolatito in the rematch. Estrada, meanwhile, had risen to No. 3 after a unanimous decision over Cuadras. Inoue was still No. 1, but when he announced his clear intention to move up in weight, the Ring ratings panel made

the unusual decision to sanction a championship fight between Nos. 2 and 3.

That event took place on February 24, 2018, in Inglewood, California, and it was an exhilarating 12 rounds, but Estrada's slower start against Sor Rungvisai's natural aggression skewed a majority decision in favor of the Thai southpaw. Sor Rungvisai thus smashed the champagne bottle on the division's bow. They would meet again 14 months later and it was another barnburner, but this time Estrada pushed from beginning to end and outboxed Sor Rungvisai, who inexplicably fought right-handed for most of the bout, to a unanimous decision.

The super flyweight in the ointment for Estrada, though, has long been Gonzalez, whose victory over him in 2012 and following pound-for-pound ascension overshadowed the Mexican technician's own elite-level skills. Even the long-awaited rematch in 2021 brought no closure, as Estrada was given a split decision some felt was undeserved. In December they'll do it again, so we'll see if another name gets added to the lineage or not.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHT: HIROTO KYOGUCHI

You might expect to see Humberto Gonzalez and Michael Carbajal in this lineage, but their heydays took place when The Ring wasn't handing out belts. And the magazine had yet to recognize the division before the great pause, so you won't find Hilario Zapata either.

The first to wear the belt at 108 pounds was Rosendo Alvarez, who minted the championship with a majority decision over Beibis Mendoza in 2003 – their third encounter. The trilogy had begun with Mendoza winning the WBA by DQ and Alvarez avenging the loss twice, but, when they did it a fourth time, Alvarez repeated the sin he'd committed at strawweight and was stripped for not making weight.

Hugo Cazares restarted the thread but soon lost the belt to Puerto Rican master matador Ivan Calderon, which resulted in one of the more fan-unfriendly reigns, as three of the southpaw's six defenses ended early due to head clashes. Also let's just say that Calderon was brilliant, but his style of boxing only appealed to a certain kind of purist, similar to future junior featherweight champ Guillermo Rigondeaux.

The belt would pass through Giovani Segura, Donnie Nietes (who defended it five times), Ryoichi Taguchi and Hekkie Budler before reaching its most dynamic champion yet. Don't let his friendly face fool you; Kyoguchi is an aggressive boxer-puncher who easily flips into brawler mode to batter his opponents with hard rights, uppercuts and combinations that only end when the ref steps in. His November unification bout with No. 1-rated Kenshiro Teraji has the potential for a true Japanese horror movie ending – two companions flashing peace signs for the camera, grinning like kids and drenched in blood.

THE WOMEN

The Ring started recognizing women's championships in 2019 and many have only been launched in the past year, so the stories are still short. Here are the pioneers currently wearing the crowns:

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT: FRANCHON CREWS-DEZURN

When No. 1-rated Swede Elin Cederroos faced Baltimore's Franchon Crews-Dezurn at Madison Square Garden last April, it was a rude collision of styles. While the taller Cederroos tried to keep things refined and at a distance with

straight punches, Crews-Dezurn was having none of it and bullied her way forward with winging shots that forced a brawl and soon had the lower half of Cederroos' face smeared with crimson. After winning a near-shutout decision that made Crews-Dezurn the first undisputed female champ at 168 pounds, the now-35-year-old described her style in an interview with CBS in her hometown: "You never know which Franchon is going to show up, because there are so many different sides to me. You might get the sharp one, you might get the bully, you might get the boxer. You might get the diva. My style is very different, but it's effective." All true.

MIDDLEWEIGHT: CLARESSA SHIELDS

Claressa Shields has since taken control of the 154-pound division as well (though she was recently stripped of the title for inactivity), but it was at middleweight that "T-Rex" became the first woman ever to win a Ring championship. And it didn't take her long to do it. After just her fourth pro bout, the two-time Olympic gold medalist owned a pair of titles at 168 pounds, and two fights later she started collecting belts at middleweight. She had three of them and a record of 8-0 (2 KOs) when she faced Christina Hammer on April 13, 2019, in Atlantic City. Hammer was 24-0 (11 KOs) and brought a sizable German fan base along with her WBC title to what was then billed as the biggest fight in women's boxing, but her cautious style of boxing collapsed under the pressure Shields relentlessly applied en route to a very wide decision on the cards. It might be premature to agree with Shields' brash "greatest woman of all time" claim, but her arrival, along with lightweight champ Katie Taylor, has been one of those transitional moments when a sport clearly goes up a level. Shields has defended her titles three times since beating Hammer and, at press time, was set to do so again on October 15 against amateur rival Savannah Marshall.

WELTERWEIGHT: JESSICA MCCASKILL

After 36 fights, 25 title defenses and zero losses, Cecilia Braekhus' epic run came to an end in 2020 after a close decision in a technically messy fight against Jessica McCaskill. With the undisputed championship on the line in the rematch, however, McCaskill convincingly defeated the former pound-for-pound queen in a way that has become something of a theme: An American pressure fighter overwhelmed a European boxer. "CasKILLA" has pounded out a pair of stoppage defenses since then, using an aggressive, almost exclusively power-punch offense that works well in two-minute rounds. She also has a great story, having gone from being homeless to being an analyst at a prestigious investment firm to being champion of the world. She lost to Katie Taylor as a lightweight in 2017 and McCaskill is eager for revenge, which would probably take place around 140 pounds – exactly where she's headed

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHT: CHANTELLE CAMERON

McCaskill's next fight will again put her in the position of being the pressure fighter vs. a more technique-oriented fighter, but it probably won't be so easy to overwhelm Chantelle Cameron. In addition to her skills and speed, the Brit can crack and she doesn't favor moving backward. Half of her 16 pro fights have ended early and none of them has resulted in a loss on her record. She put herself in the No. 1 position by stopping Melissa

Hernandez in five rounds, then won the Ring championship by matching Mary McGee's aggression but one-upping her in accuracy for a wide decision victory. Cameron has made one defense since then, a shutout over former lightweight titleholder Victoria Bustos. With two vacant titles also thrown onto the pile for November 5, a win over McCaskill would make her the undisputed champion.

LIGHTWEIGHT: KATIE TAYLOR

Look at Katie Taylor's amateur history and you'll see gold all the way to the horizon. As a boxer, she's got all the stuff you want – a great jab, sharp counterpunching, accurate power, hand speed, intelligent footwork – and as a fighter she's got the tendency to forsake all of these advantages and dive headfirst into a brawl with all her heart, which is enormous. That fighting spirit along with an always-gracious, humble demeanor has endeared her to countless fans. As a pro, she collected her first title in her seventh fight and by her 14th was fighting for the undisputed championship against Delfine Persoon, one of the most experienced titleholders in women's boxing at 43-1 (18 KOs). It was a tough fight and Taylor was a little wobbly afterward, but she happily granted the rematch and won another close battle. Five fights after that, the pound-for-pound queen faced Amanda Serrano and was the narrow winner of a blockbuster that triggered Fight of the Year talk – not just women's, but *the* Fight of the Year. There's been mumbling about the 36-year-old Irish warrior slowing down, but it doesn't seem like Taylor got the memo.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHT: MIKAELA MAYER

By the time you read this, Mikaela Mayer will have faced off with Alycia Baumgardner in London for the undisputed championship. Mayer's contribution to the pot was the IBF, WBO and Ring titles, the last of which she won a year ago with a unanimous decision over knockout artist Maiva Hamadouche in Las Vegas. Despite the wide scorecards, that was a nonstop war in which Mayer landed half of the

nearly 500 power punches she threw – 78 of them body shots, according to ESPN – to pass the toughest test of her career yet. She followed it up by dismantling Jennifer Han, who was no match for the Californian's well-conditioned volume attack and solid boxing skills.

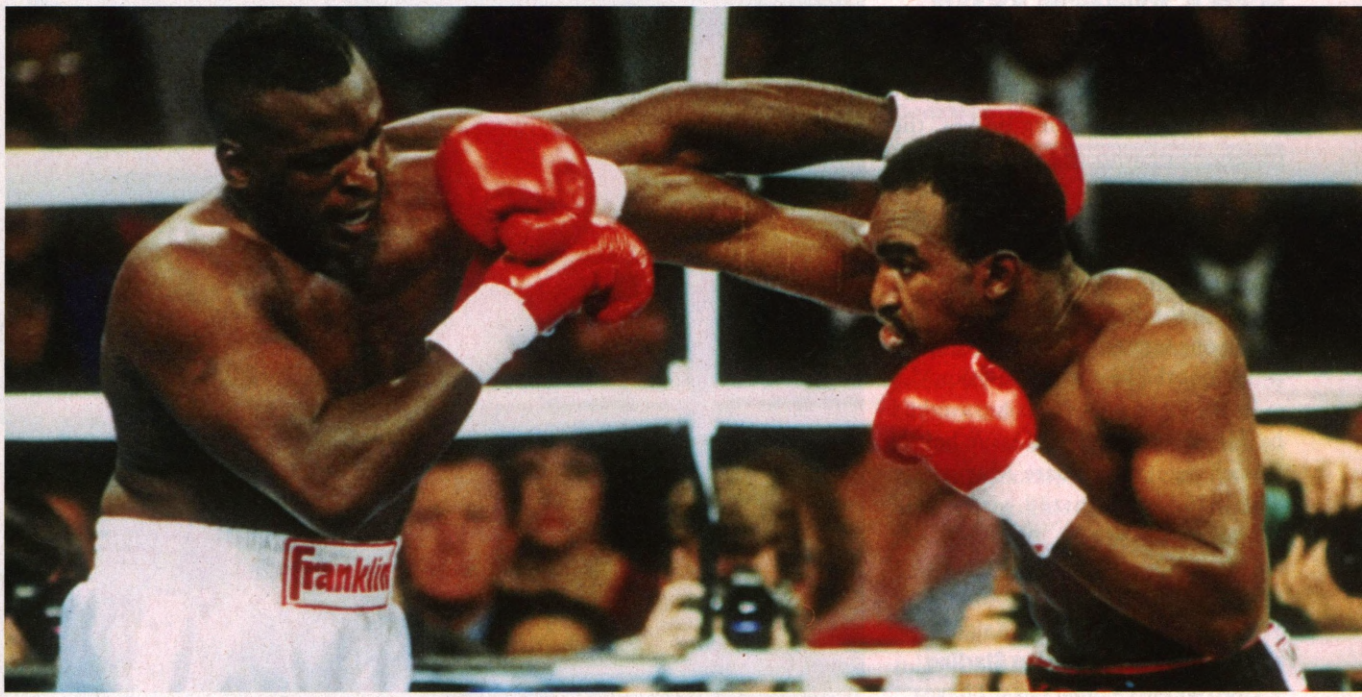
FEATHERWEIGHT: AMANDA SERRANO

Amanda Serrano faced Katie Taylor two divisions above her usual fighting weight under enormous pressure to produce an event of unprecedented scale, and she gave the lightweight champ all she could handle and the fans all they wanted. That should tell you many things about the Puerto Rican Brooklynite. She has won major sanctioning body titles in *seven* divisions, from junior bantamweight to junior welterweight, but it wasn't until her most recent fight that she added a Ring belt by unanimously outpointing Sarah Mahfoud. Serrano's experience and punching power are a scary combination for any potential opponent, and her division-fluid willingness to fight means her options are many. The winner of Mayer-Baumgardner is a definite candidate.

FLYWEIGHT: MARLEN ESPARZA

Marlen Esparza won a bronze medal at the 2012 Olympics on the strength of her technique, but she has admitted to some early difficulty with transitioning to a professional style. Seniesa Estrada, whose approach to boxing is so anti-amateur that it borders on animosity, highlighted the difference in a bloody battle that ended with a technical decision loss for Esparza in 2019. But the Texan has since hardened her game and is on a six-fight streak, including a WBC title-winning performance against Mexican veteran Ibeth Zamora Silva, a fast-paced battle with Naoko Fujioka for the Ring/WBA/WBC championship last April, which Esparza won by unanimous decision, and a unanimous decision over Eva Guzman in her first defense. Estrada is now the No. 1 strawweight, still undefeated and no less disdainful, so a rematch would most likely be a hot ticket.

CHAMPION
WBC
EVANDER HOLYFIELD
UNDISPUTED WORLD
HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION
10-25-90
LLBE 10:9



THE LOST CHAMPIONS

WITH THE RING'S CHAMPIONSHIP POLICY ON HOLD FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, MANY DESERVING FIGHTERS MISSED THEIR CHANCE TO OWN THE COVETED BELT

By Cliff Rold

Ring Magazine championship belts have been a fixture in boxing almost since the magazine's birth in 1922. Heavyweight champion Jack Dempsey began a tradition that has continued into this centennial year of the publication.

Except for when it didn't.

Two events between 1987 and 1990 altered the course of history when it comes to who did, and did not, receive their earned rewards as The Ring's recognized world champion.

The June 1987 issue of The Ring presented rankings in 13 weight classes. In the July 1987 issue, The Ring opted to return to only the "original eight" classic weight divisions – heavyweight, light heavyweight, middleweight, welterweight, lightweight, featherweight, bantamweight and flyweight – while combining the rankings of the "junior" divisions into the classes above them. That meant the removal of rankings at cruiserweight, junior middleweight, junior welterweight, junior lightweight and junior featherweight.

The Ring at the time recognized champions in two of those abandoned weight divisions. That meant the reigns of cruiserweight Carlos De Leon and junior lightweight Brian Mitchell were no longer acknowledged.

An even more dramatic change was to come. As recounted in the 100th anniversary issue of The Ring:

Under new management, The Ring opted to drop the "champion" designation and rate just 10 fighters in each division in the January 1990 issue. Editor-in-chief Steve Farhood provided the rationale in the May 1990 issue's Ringside column. "In a perfect boxing world, there would be one champion per division. But there isn't one champion per division, and whether you accept the WBC,

Evander Holyfield vs. Buster Douglas

LOST CHAMPIONS

WBA and IBF, or dismiss them as self-serving sanctioning bodies, the questions of who deserves to be the real champion, and who doesn't, are no longer simple ones." Farhood later added the philosophy going forward would be focused on "who is the better fighter. What's the point of rating one fighter the world champion if he's not the best in the division?"

In the eight weight classes ranked by The Ring in the final issue before this change, cover date May 1989, The Ring recognized six world champions:

- **HEAVYWEIGHT - Mike Tyson**
- **MIDDLEWEIGHT - Sumbu Kalambay**
- **WELTERWEIGHT - Marlon Starling**
- **LIGHTWEIGHT - Julio Cesar Chavez**
- **FEATHERWEIGHT - Antonio Esparragoza**
- **FLYWEIGHT - Yong Kang Kim**

The January 1990 issue ranked 10 men apiece in 15 weight classes. Holders of the IBF, WBA and WBC world titles (the WBO was still a fledgling sanctioning organization and not recognized by the publication) were noted in each divisional top 10. Only one man, Tyson, carried the honor of "World Champ" next to his name. The new standard was established. To be called world champion was to have all three of those alphabet straps.

If a fighter unified all the belts and then gave one up, they were no longer listed as "World Champ." When Riddick Bowe defeated Evander Holyfield in their first fight, he was listed in the March 1993 issue as "World Champ." One issue later, after famously (or infamously) dumping the WBC belt in the trash, he was listed only as "WBA/IBF champ."

There were still a smattering of Ring Magazine belts handed out for other honors. Fighters selected as Fighter of the Year would get a strap in their honor for a cover shot. The July 1995 issue established an honorary belt for earning the top spot in the pound-for-pound ratings, with Pernell Whitaker the first recipient.

Whether any of the small handful of undisputed champions in the 1990s received honorary divisional belts in the early 1990s is unknown at the time of this writing, but it is assumed they did not.

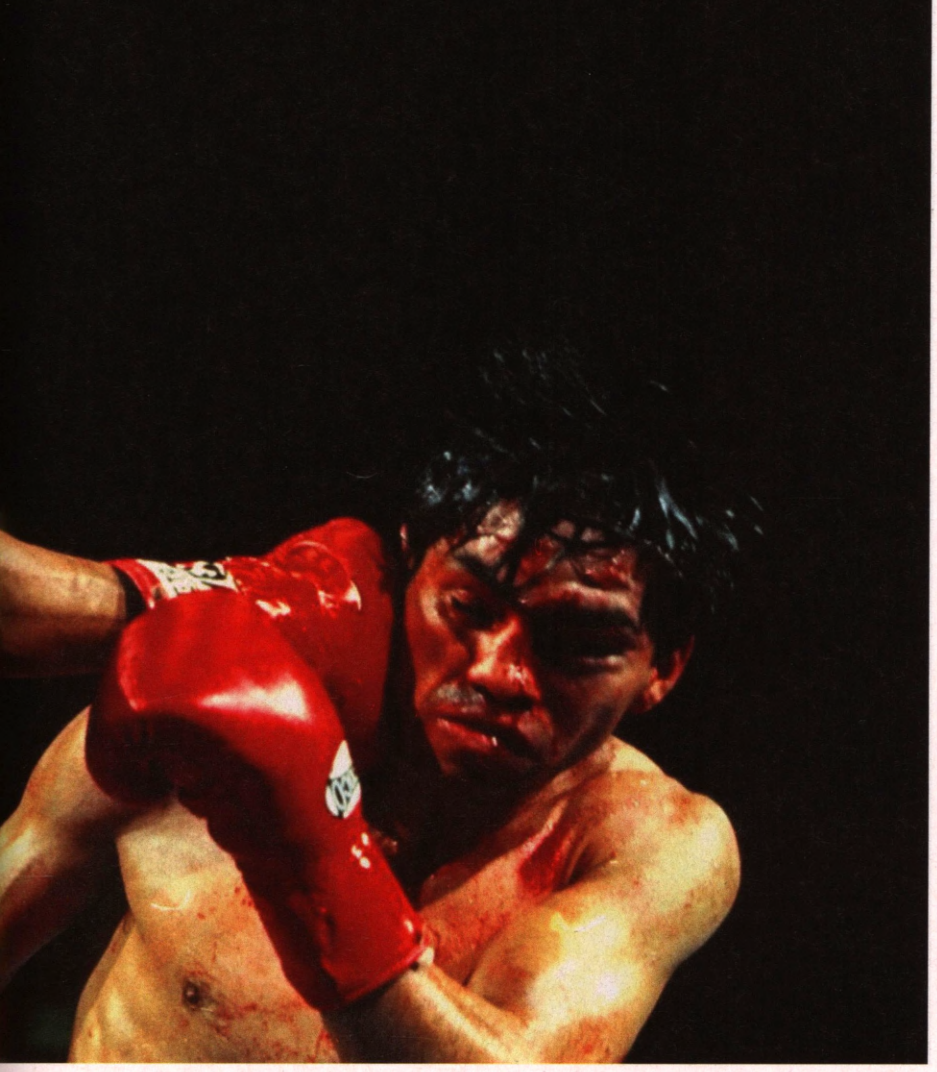
It isn't like that now. In the April 2002 issue, The Ring returned to its more traditional approach. For most of the last 20 years, the standard has been that if a divisional title is vacant, a fight between whoever The Ring ranks No. 1 and No. 2 crowns a champion; in some occasions, a fight between the No. 1- and No. 3-ranked contenders does as well.

It begs the question: How many fighters from those years between the July 1987 issue and the April 2002 issue missed out on an extra piece for their trophy cases because of the editorial changes?

In an effort to answer that question, a review of the rankings from those years looked at two things. The first was the champions recognized in the June 1987 and May 1989 issues, tracing who would have followed in those lines. The next was any occasion where The Ring a) would otherwise have had a vacant championship and b) a fight took place between those ranked No. 1 and No. 2.

Consideration was given to looking for occasions where the No. 1- and No. 3-ranked contenders squared off as well. Doing so would have required guesswork as to what would have been seen by the editors at the time as cases for exception. Limiting it to just cases of No. 1-vs.-No. 2 faceoffs removes that obstacle and reveals a pool of more than 50 lost Ring Magazine championship reigns at stops all along the scale.

Heavyweight is the easiest place to start, and its title remained undisputed until late 1992, passing through Mike Tyson, Buster Douglas, Evander Holyfield and finally Bowe. Had The Ring continued to recognize



Michael Carbajal vs. Humberto Gonzalez

champions by succession, Holyfield again, Michael Moorer, George Foreman, Shannon Briggs, Lennox Lewis and Hasim Rahman would all have had their Ring Magazine belts.

In a hint that things were moving back toward recognition of Ring Magazine champions, the June 2000 issue featured Lewis on the cover a few months after his 1999 rematch victory over Holyfield. The headline read "Lennox Lewis Receives the 'Undisputed' Ring Belt." Had The Ring never changed its policies, Lewis would already have had The Ring's title belt for a couple years.

At cruiserweight, the 1987 changes cost Evander Holyfield his opportunity to be recognized as champion. Holyfield stopped De Leon in 1988 to become the first undisputed cruiserweight king. Holyfield could have been a three-time Ring Magazine champion in two weight classes.

There were no clashes between Ring's No. 1- and No. 2-ranked contenders in the years between Holyfield leaving cruiserweight and the return of Ring belts in 2002.

Light heavyweight highlights a place where history could have played out very differently. In the February 1997 issue, on the eve of an IBF/WBA unification clash, Henry Maske and Virgil Hill were ranked first and second. Hill won and under current editorial policy would definitely have been crowned champion by The Ring.

When The Ring resumed recognizing champions in 2002, it opted not to work retroactively and instead recognized Roy Jones as champion. Jones by then held the IBF, WBA and WBC belts. Had the policy never changed and history otherwise played the same in the ring, a Ring champion's line consisting of Roy Jones, Antonio Tarver, Glen Johnson, Bernard Hopkins and Joe Calzaghe could have instead read well past 2002 as "Hill, Dariusz Michalczewski, Julio Cesar Gonzalez and Zsolt Erdei."

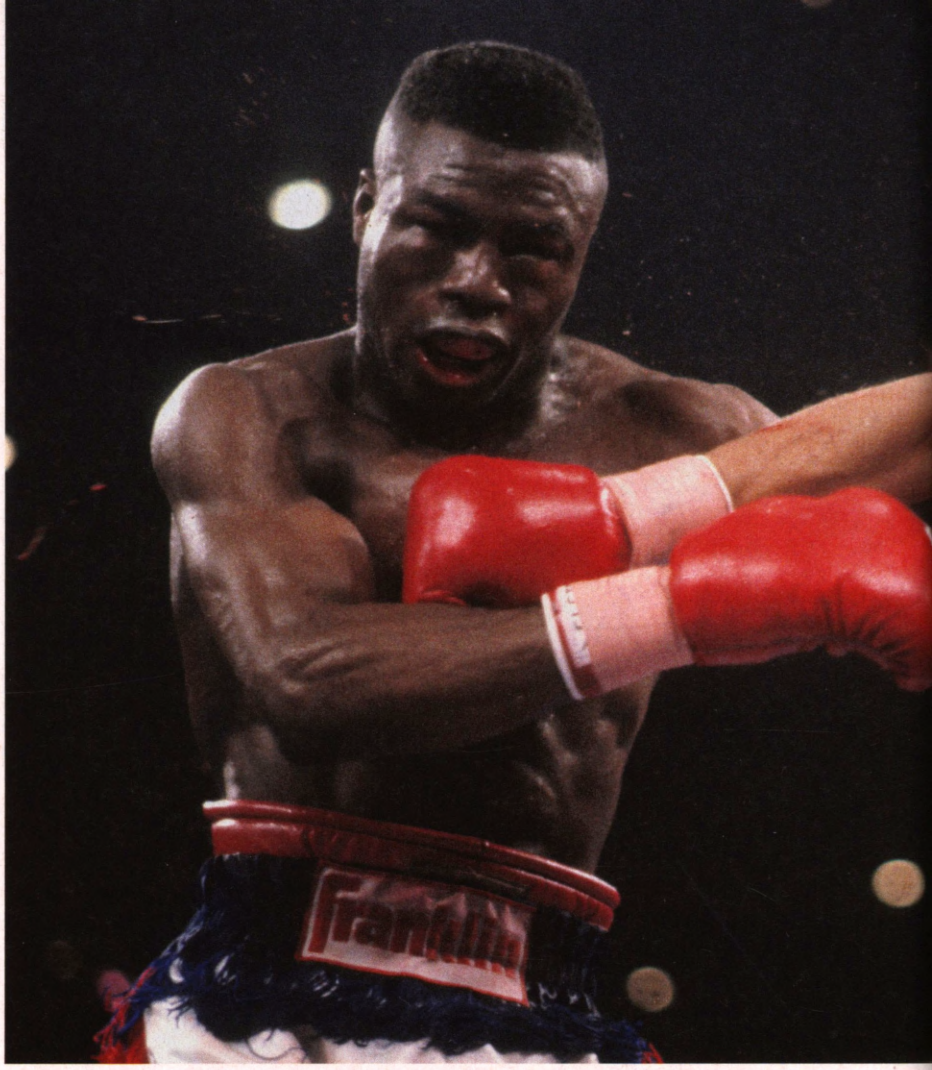
The Ring didn't recognize super middleweight until the January 1990 issue. Other outlets, notably Boxing Illustrated, recognized the division sooner and listed In-Chul Baek as rightful champion, tracing to the modern origins of the division in the mid-1980s. If The Ring's editors had been inclined to add the super middleweight class and continue the championship policy, would they have followed BI's example or would they have started a new lineage?

If the magazine had started fresh, The Ring still would not have had a super middleweight champion until Joe Calzaghe-Jeff Lacy. Calzaghe was ranked first, Lacy third, and the editors of the time made a No. 1-vs.-No. 3 exception there. No clash of No. 1- and No. 2-ranked super middleweights in the lost years was identified, though the top two contenders in Ring's debut super middleweight rankings were just months removed from a contentious draw.

Those two men, Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns, never engaged in a third fight.

Sumbu Kalambay was Ring's middleweight champion in the May 1989 issue. Michael Nunn's first-round knockout of Kalambay, and James Toney's 11th-round TKO of Nunn, would have added two more middleweights to the roster of Ring Magazine champions. Toney moved up the scale and would have left the throne vacant until 2001, when Bernard Hopkins stopped Felix Trinidad.

The dominant name at junior middleweight in the 1990s, Terry Norris, would eventually have earned Ring's honors. A unification clash with Paul Vaden in 1995 is what gets him there. In the March 1996 issue prior to the fight, Norris was ranked



No. 1 and Vaden No. 2. The line from there would have seen Keith Mullings, Javier Castillejo and Oscar De La Hoya crowned champion.

De La Hoya ultimately got there anyway, earning recognition from The Ring after his stoppage of Fernando Vargas in 2002. With a different history, The Golden Boy gets there earlier.

Welterweight is an easy path to follow. Starling was the last Ring-recognized welterweight king, tracing back to Donald Curry's unification of the division. Starling would have been followed by Maurice Blocker, Simon Brown, Buddy McGirt, Pernell Whitaker, De La Hoya and Trinidad. The title would have remained vacant, using No. 1-vs.-No. 2 or No. 1-vs.-No. 3 standards, until resuming as we know it when Vernon Forrest upset Shane Mosley in 2002.

Arguably the fight of the decade in the 1990s, Julio Cesar Chavez-Meldrick Taylor would have meant a Ring Magazine junior welterweight champion. Chavez and Taylor were ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the July 1990 issue. They delivered a war worthy of the honors and Chavez would have been followed by Frankie Randall, Chavez again and then De La Hoya. De La Hoya's move to welterweight would have left the title vacant until Kostya Tszyu unified the division against Zab Judah in 2001.

De La Hoya, as current owner of The Ring, can feel justified in commissioning a couple extra belts for his mantle. He earned them.

Whitaker's unification of the lightweight division in 1991 made clear his claim as world champion. He and Juan Nazario were ranked No. 1 and No. 2 in the November 1990 issue as well. Whitaker ultimately vacated at lightweight, and no other clash was identified that would have filled the lightweight throne before Floyd Mayweather-Jose Luis Castillo I in 2002.

Mayweather factors one division lower as the man who should have finished a line of Ring Magazine champions. Earlier in this piece, it was noted that when The Ring removed junior lightweight from its rankings in 1987, it recognized Brian Mitchell as champion. Had the division stayed in the rankings with champions continuing to be recognized, Mitchell would have reigned until his retirement removed him.

His retirement would have been timely.

Mitchell exited the rankings after the May 1992 issue. The June 1992 issue featured a No. 1-ranked Jeff Fenech and a No. 2-ranked Azumah Nelson. The July 1992 issue would have celebrated Nelson's knockout of Fenech in their rematch as a coronation of a new Ring champion. From there, it would have been Jesse James Leija, Gabe Ruelas, Nelson again, Genaro Hernandez and finally Mayweather.

Antonio Esparragoza's reign at featherweight would have been followed by Yong-Kyun Park, Eloy Rojas, Wilfredo Vazquez, Naseem Hamed and Marco Antonio Barrera. Barrera eventually ended up with a restored Ring title after his victory in the second fight with Erik Morales in 2002.

While Barrera and Morales did fill a Ring vacancy at featherweight, they could have done so at junior featherweight as well. Morales was ranked first and Barrera second in the June 2000 issue and no other No. 1-vs.-No. 2 fight was identified at 122 pounds before then in the lost years. Morales won that encounter.

Bantamweight didn't have an identified No. 1-vs.-No. 2 fight in any of the years reviewed here and would have remained vacant. Junior bantamweight would not have. The November 1997 issue ranked Johnny Tapia first and Danny Romero second heading into a fight Tapia won in exciting fashion. After Tapia moved on to bantamweight in 1998, the

Julio Cesar Chavez (R) vs Meldrick Taylor

115-pound title would have stayed vacant until 2002.

In 1989, Yong-Kang Kim was part of a line of Ring flyweight champions at the time that could be traced back to the 1970s reign of Miguel Canto. That line would have persisted through Sot Chitalada, Muangchai Kittikasem, Yuri Arbachakov, Chatchai Sasakul, Manny Pacquiao and Medgoen Singsurat.

It is assumed The Ring would have recognized Singsurat's win despite Pacquiao missing weight; lineal historians have recognized that title change at flyweight over the years, and The Ring later followed similar logic when Joel Casamayor defeated Diego Corrales for its title at lightweight in 2006.

From Singsurat, flyweight honors would have passed to Malcolm Tunacao and then Pongsaklek Wonjongkam. The line would have remained unbroken until Roman Gonzalez vacated to move to junior bantamweight in 2016. The Ring ultimately caught up to its own history when Wonjongkam defeated Koki Kameda for its vacant flyweight title in 2010. Wonjongkam could have been a two-time Ring champion.

The richest junior flyweight rivalry of the 1990s was the series between Michael Carbajal and Humberto Gonzalez. They were ranked first and third, respectively, prior to Carbajal's victory in their first bout. Fellow Hall of Famer Myung Woo Yuh was sandwiched between them. Yuh retired before the rematch. Carbajal and Gonzalez were Nos. 1 and 2 in the May 1994 issue. Gonzalez won the rematch, and he would have been followed by Saman Sorjaturong, Yo-Sam Choi and Jorge Arce. Instead, when The Ring resumed recognizing champions in 2002, junior flyweight was left vacant until Rosendo Alvarez defeated Beibis Mendoza in March 2003.

Strawweight has never had a Ring champion and didn't get a top 10 in the magazine's pages until the January 1999 issue. In the February 1999 issue, Rosendo Alvarez was ranked second to Ricardo Lopez heading into a rematch of a hotly contested first fight. Lopez won their bloody return. While Alvarez missed weight by more than three pounds for the rematch, it's hard to imagine Lopez's decade of dominance would have been overlooked.

History is a funny thing. Events that unfolded in real time are immutable. The history of Ring Magazine championships is written. Rewriting it would be complicated, particularly at light heavyweight and junior flyweight. Men like Roy Jones and Rosendo Alvarez have their Ring Magazine title belts to remind how it all played out for real.

There's no denying what was lost, though. It can look so easy to correct by using other pieces of the same immutable history found in The Ring's own rankings. Every name found here isn't one that will evoke a great deal of emotion, but some of them should. Mayweather and Pacquiao, the only two men to be lineal champions in four different weight classes, are each missing one of the Ring Magazine championships they could have had. Other lost champions identified here, names like Nelson, Norris, Toney, Morales and Trinidad, could have been able to look back on their physical piece of a 100-year history at The Ring.

While well-intended at the time, the editorial choices made at The Ring in 1987 and 1989 took that chance away from them.

Sure, it's just a belt, and boxing has plenty of them.

Everyone with a belt can't say they would have won the same belt held in old, frayed photos we see with Nat Fleischer standing next to a Dempsey, Louis or Robinson.

These men would have.

TONEY
Richard T. Slone '22

CHAMPIONS ON THE CANVAS

COLLECTOR **INGO WEGERICH** HAS PUT TOGETHER AN ASTONISHING EXHIBITION OF BOXING-RELATED ART

By Tom Gray

Above: Wegerich poses alongside two original Canelo-Golovkin artworks.

IF YOU'RE A HARDCORE FIGHT FAN, THEN THE SIGHT ALMOST TAKES YOUR BREATH AWAY.

The original artwork of heavyweight legend Joe Louis for his first solo Ring cover (August 1937 issue) is less than the length of a jab away. Nearby, Sugar Ray Robinson is magnificent in his welterweight heyday (August 1947 issue), complete with Ring championship belt. Cross another seven decades and Canelo Alvarez is throwing down against arch nemesis Gennadiy Golovkin in the first of three superfights.

German art collector Ingo Wegerich purchased the Canelo-GGG original – his first boxing acquisition – from acclaimed British artist Richard T. Slone in 2017, and he's been on a roll ever since. As well as purchasing directly from Slone, who is a personal friend, the Frankfurt-based lawyer also buys from private collectors and auctions.

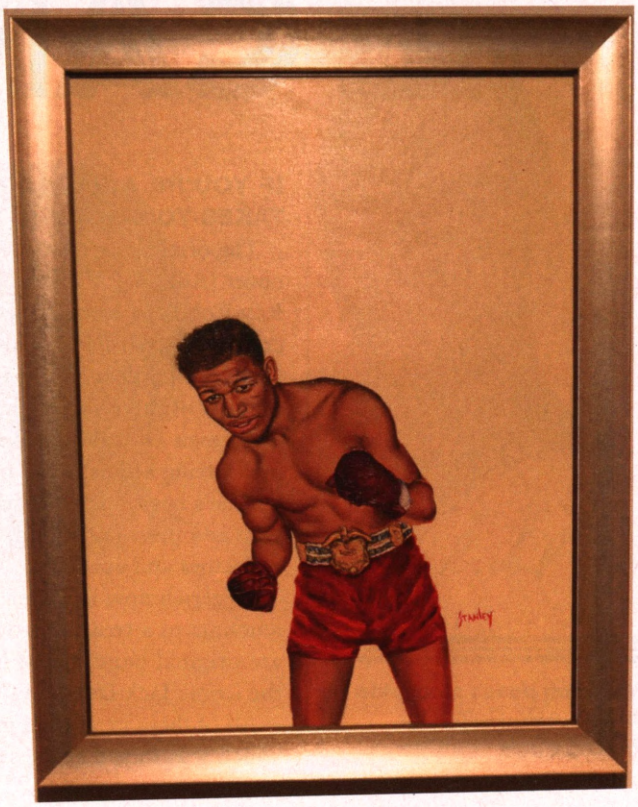
Wegerich now has over 80 items, including 41 original Ring covers, in what amounts to a treasure trove of fistic fine art. In "Bible of Boxing" terms, there are original paintings of Max Schmeling, Rocky Marciano, Lou Ambers and the iconic Jack Dempsey-Joe Louis "Dream Fight" artwork.

All of these items, and much more, appeared at the Boxing in Art Exhibition, which was staged at the swanky Airport Frankfurt Club on September 22.

PAINTING BY RICHARD T. STONE

"I waited for the right moment to showcase the collection," Wegerich told The Ring shortly after the exhibition concluded. "I love art, and The Ring magazine covers are special. I saw this place and I needed somewhere elegant to display the art. This is a private club, there are a lot of celebrities and big companies, so I wanted to show the artwork to interesting people who can spread the news of the exhibition far and wide.

"The more people know it, the better it is. What I loved most was that you have not just boxing people, but art people and casual people. Through boxing art, they can become interested in boxing, and that's wonderful. The artwork



A gallery of stunning paintings from a golden era in boxing.

ZOBEYDE KOPP; STUDIOZETA; FURY/TYSON: RICHARD T. SLIONE

GYPSY KING

is timeless. You have old fighters like Joe Louis and Max Schmeling preserved in history."

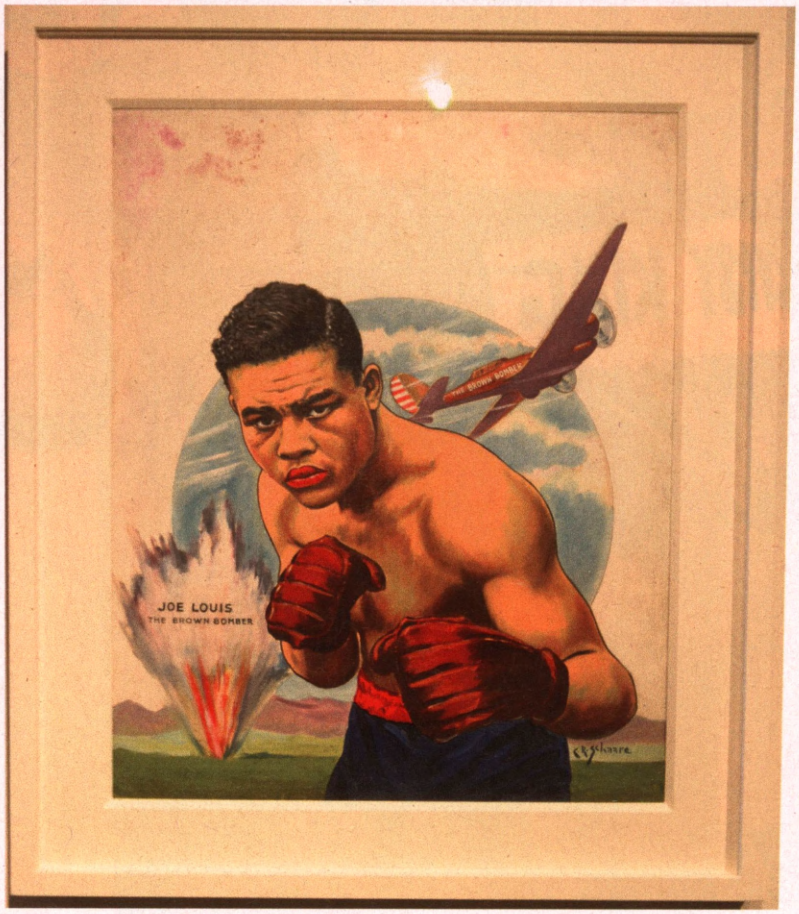
During the exhibition, Wegerich presented former three-weight world champion Regina Halmich with an original piece of art by Slone. In the painting, Halmich, one of the most successful female fighters of all time and a pioneer for the women's game, is featured alongside her fellow International Boxing Hall of Fame 2022 inductees: Miguel Cotto, Roy Jones Jr., James Toney, Holly Holm, Bill Caplan, Bob Yalen and Ron Borges.

The 45-year-old Halmich, who attended the event with her father, was visibly moved upon receiving the gift.

"Regina deserves it," said Wegerich of his guest of honor. "She didn't ask for money to attend the exhibition; she just wanted me to donate to a charity for animals. She wanted to do something good, and I wanted to do something good for her. That was my inspiration."

During the event, I took the liberty of sending reigning WBC heavyweight champion Tyson Fury a photograph of Slone's original Fury-Mike Tyson mythical matchup artwork that was designed for the July 2020 issue of The Ring. "The Gypsy King" dutifully responded with love.

"That's amazing," said Wegerich upon hearing the news. "Tyson Fury can do so much with just a simple message. The painter deserves credit. It's a great way to promote and it doesn't cost anything. That type of thing transcends to casual fans and it makes boxing bigger. Tyson Fury is an amazing person."



Above: Mayweather-McGregor. Right: Iconic Joe Louis art from 1937.

Frazier-Ali and mythical Fury-Tyson matchup art, both by Richard Slone. Left: Lightweight legend Lou Ambers.

So will Wegerich take the exhibition to boxing hotbeds across the world?

"I don't want to make money, but, at the same time, I don't want to lose money," said Wegerich in earnest. "This is my passion, but I don't want to give away my pension for it. (laughs)

"To take such an event overseas, we'd need sponsors. There are costs for taking art overseas and those costs have to be covered. If you go to the U.S., you have to take the artwork over, pay insurance and rent space for the exhibition."

If Wegerich does manage to take his show on the road, then fight fans the world over would be in for a treat. In the meantime, the exhibition, which was covered by two of Germany's biggest newspapers, will remain at the Airport Club Frankfurt for the next several months. »

Multi-weight world champ Regina Halmich is presented with original Slone artwork. Below: Halmich, Wegerich and Ring Managing Editor Tom Gray

REGINA HALMICH

Pro Career: 1994-2007 • Record: 54-1-1 (16 KOs) • Titles Won: IBF junior flyweight/IBF flyweight/IBF junior bantamweight • IBHOF Induction: 2022

"This artwork was such a special present. You cannot buy this. It's the nicest present that I've ever had, because it brings back so many memories. I will have it in my house in a very special place.

"It was so exciting [to be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame]. I spent three days in Canastota and it was unbelievable. There were so many superstars: Floyd Mayweather, Laila Ali, James Toney, Roy Jones. It was such an honor that I couldn't believe it. It was like a dream. When they called to tell me I was being inducted, I was speechless, but now I know it's reality. It will be in my heart for the rest of my life.

"It was a tough road to get people's respect [when it comes to women's boxing]. But the best argument for my success was the amount of people who watched my fights. More people watched my fights [in Germany] than some men's fights, and it was around that time that we saw change in women's boxing. It's a new time now, a new era, and we see pioneers like Claressa Shields, Savannah Marshall, Katie Taylor and Amanda Serrano. I did it in the beginning and they do it now. It's still a hard time, but they do it in a very good way." RING

Halmich poses alongside painting of German great Max Schmeling, which was used for the October 1936 cover of The Ring.

Tom Gray is managing editor for Ring Magazine. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing.

MICHAEL SPINKS: GREATEST HITS

IN A CAREER STRETCHING FROM OLYMPIC GOLD TO THE HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP, **"JINX"** SHINED IN ONE OF BOXING'S GOLDEN ERAS

By Anson Wainwright

Above: Spinks celebrates a 1978 victory with brother Leon.

Michael Spinks won Olympic gold as part of the 1976 "Dream Team," which also included older brother Leon. As a professional, he would become a champion at both light heavyweight and heavyweight.

His light heavyweight reign was particularly impressive. During the division's golden era, Spinks fought the best available opposition and is widely considered to be among the best 175-pounders ever.

Spinks was born in St. Louis on July 13, 1956. His early years were fairly typical of the time.

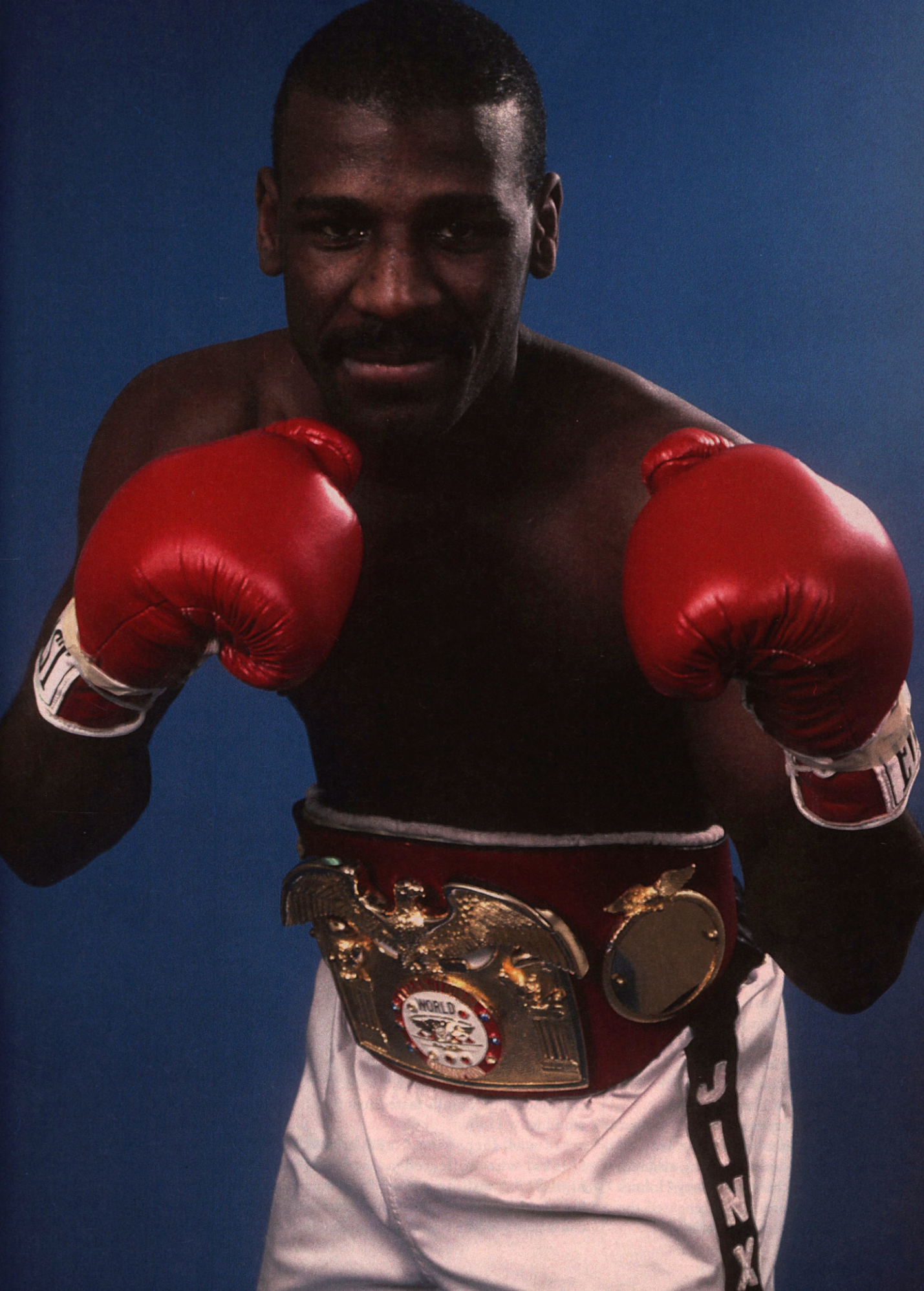
"You had some bullies. Once Leon and myself learned to box, the bullies left us alone," Spinks told The Ring. "The Westbrook brothers – I think there was about three or four of them, and Leon used to get picked on a lot. So they took Leon to the gym, and he came back home and said, 'Mike, guess what? I've been to the boxing gym.' I said, 'Oh, yeah.'

"I was picking on Leon and he put some punches on me, and so the very next day I went to the gym to learn how to fight myself."

From the age of 11 until the Olympics, Spinks never looked back. Five members of the hugely successful team brought home gold medals from Montreal, including Michael (middleweight), Leon (light heavyweight), Sugar Ray Leonard (light welterweight), Howard Davis (lightweight) and Leo Randolph (flyweight).

"That was great that we became Olympic champions, especially both of us," said Michael. "I was more motivating Leon, because if I won, Leon was bound to win after me."

Spinks turned professional in April 1977. He won his first 16 outings, notably


WORLD
JINX

beating future IBF super middleweight titlist Murray Sutherland (UD 10), perennial light heavyweight contender Yaqui Lopez (TKO 7) and three-time light heavyweight titleholder Marvin Johnson (KO 4).

Those wins helped earn Spinks a fight with the vastly more experienced Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, who held the WBA light heavyweight title. Spinks prevailed on points to claim his first world title.

He later added the Ring championship and WBC title at the expense of Dwight Muhammad Qawi and then defeated Eddie Davis for the IBF belt, all the while establishing his credentials as the premier light heavyweight of his generation.

Having conquered the 175-pound division, "Jinx" made the leap to heavyweight and upset long-reigning heavyweight champion Larry Holmes as a 6-1 underdog. He repeated the victory in a direct rematch.

Spinks at his 2017 Nevada Boxing Hall of Fame induction.

Soon after that was a big-money fight against Gerry Cooney, and despite being some 30 pounds lighter, Spinks was far too much for the hard-punching New Yorker and emphatically stopped him in five rounds.

And then there was Mike Tyson. Spinks, now the Ring champion after beating Holmes, would face a prime Iron Mike in June 1988 for what would be widely recognized as the undisputed heavyweight championship. Spinks lasted just 91 seconds.

"It was surprising," admitted Spinks, who collected a career-high $13.5 million purse. "I saw his punching power, but I thought I could get by in the ring with him. But when he hit me, I went down.

"I think that Mike was as good as he ever was that night. He was hitting pretty hard, I know that much."

Spinks never seriously contemplated returning to action after that night.

"I said if I ever lost a fight, that would be it for me," said Spinks (31-1, 21 knockouts), who walked away from boxing at 31 years old. I had had enough. I enjoyed my reign in the ring. I enjoyed myself and the fights were pretty good."

Since then, the 1994 International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee has lived the quiet life in Greenville, Delaware. Now 66, he has three children and five grandchildren.

"I did pretty much what I wanted to do," said Spinks. "I'm enjoying life and everything is good."

Here are his memories of six career-defining performances.

YAQUI LOPEZ

October 18, 1980, Convention Center, Atlantic City • Non-title fight

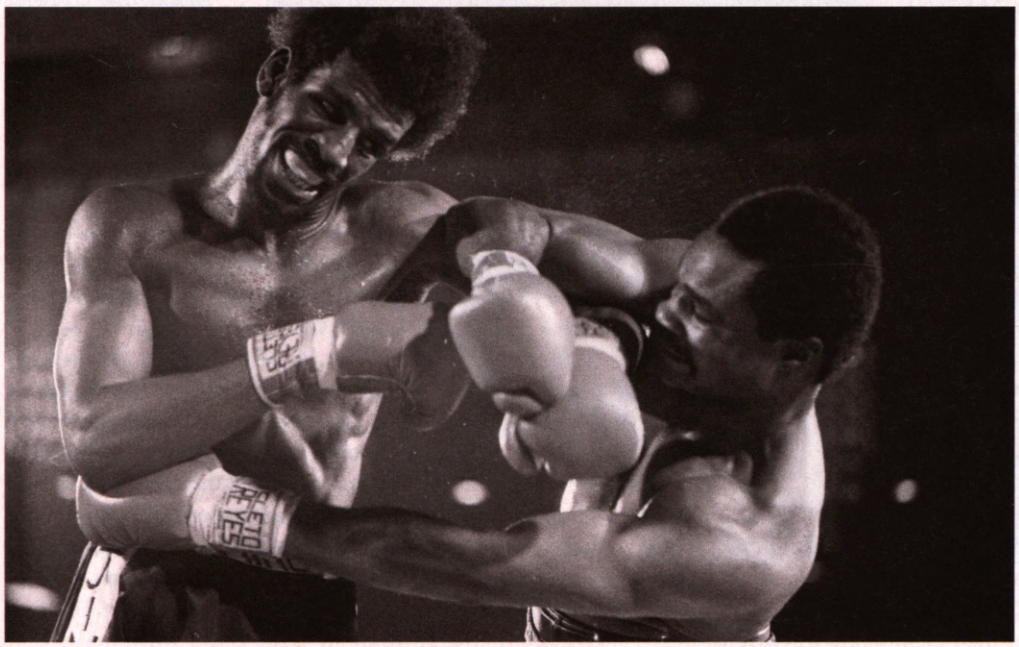
"Yaqui had fought for the [world] title [four times]. He gave [WBC titleholder] Matthew Saad Muhammad a good fight [three months earlier]. He was pretty tough.

"I had no fear, because we both did the same thing. We both boxed. I had to overpower Yaqui with my style, but he was tough. He threw a lot of punches and I just had to avoid being hit. Yaqui was Yaqui and he came to fight. He wasn't messing around.

"My first coach taught me to keep my hands up. You've got to have your hands up. Jim Merrill taught us how to swipe a jab. My style of boxing, I learned how to do offense and I learned how to do defense. That was my style of boxing, bob and weave. You got to get the hell out of the way of some of those punches. Bob and weave.

"I had a lot of guys I sparred with that helped me get ready for Yaqui. He was throwing a nice group of punches, but I threw some punches he couldn't handle and got him off me, and then I was able to put some punches together that knocked him down."

RESULT: SPINKS TKO 7



EDDIE MUSTAFA MUHAMMAD

July 18, 1981, Imperial Palace Hotel, Las Vegas • Title: WBA light heavyweight

"I boxed a lot of guys that helped me get ready to fight him. Eddie was kind of difficult with his style. He was hitting pretty hard, too. It was a big night for me.

"We got in the ring and I was jabbing to throw him off a little bit. It was interesting. I kind of got to him in the later rounds. I threw a double hook and right hand and knocked him down; I think it was the 13th round. He got up and I kept jabbing him.

"It meant everything to me [when I heard the scorecards] because I had done all the hard work to win the fight and I won. Eddie was a pretty tough opponent.

"I think I went back to my room and just lay down and was just happy I won that fight. I can't remember what I did [after the fight], but I think I went to Florida."

RESULT: SPINKS UD 15

DWIGHT MUHAMMAD QAWI

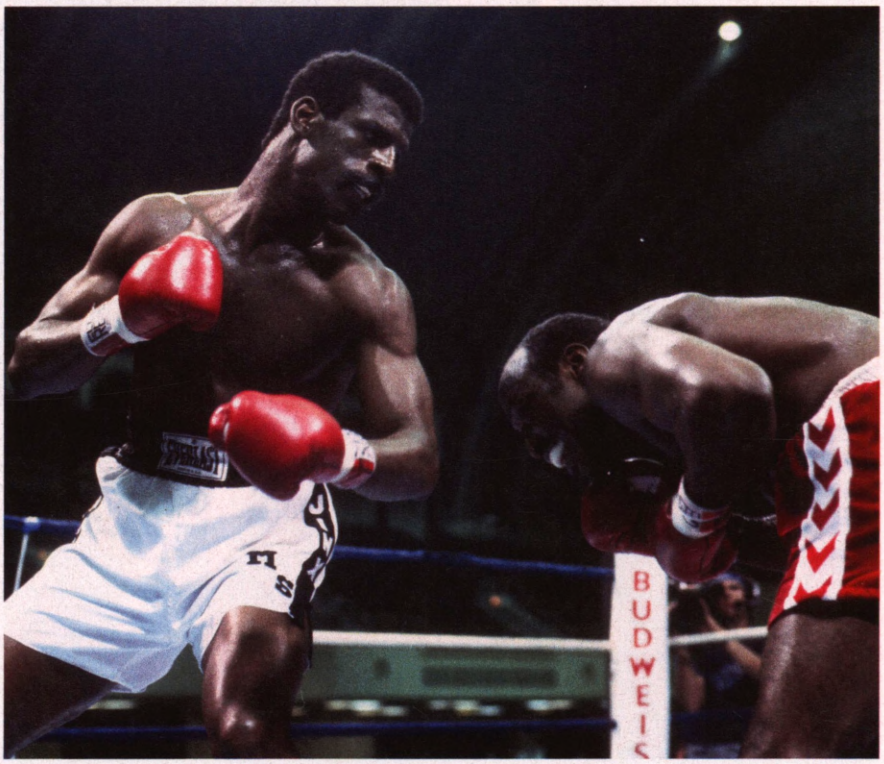
March 18, 1983, Convention Center, Atlantic City • Titles: Ring/WBA/WBC light heavyweight

"A lot of people didn't know when [Qawi] had got out of prison, he came to Joe Frazier's gym. I used to get in the ring with him and box him almost every day. He needed work and I needed work; Joe Frazier's floor manager used to match us up. I used to handle him back then.

"Once he won the WBC title it was like we had to fight. He was doing pretty well beating opponents. When we got in the ring, I was hoping he remembered me from Joe Frazier's gym. He was pretty ferocious in the ring, winning fights. He had improved and was fighting a lot better than he was when I was sparring with him. We were boxing and I think I hit him with a left hook and right hand, and that put him back in check. That helped me handle him in that match.

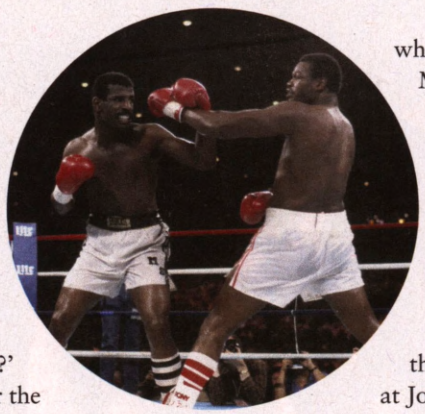
"It was kind of strange that we got in the ring to box for our titles, it was a good matchup between us. It meant a whole lot to me to win the [WBC] and Ring Magazine titles."

RESULT: SPINKS UD 15



LARRY HOLMES 1

September 21, 1985, Riviera Hotel & Casino, Outdoor Arena, Las Vegas • Titles: Ring/IBF heavyweight



"It wasn't my decision [to move up to heavyweight.] It was my promoter, Butch Lewis. He came to me one day and said, 'We're fighting for the heavyweight championship.' I said, 'What?' he said, 'You're fighting Larry Holmes for the heavyweight championship.' I was flabbergasted. I said, 'What do you think?' [Lewis] said, 'You can beat him.' I said, 'You think so?' He said, 'Yeah. We're going to get ready for him.' Like I say, I was flabbergasted, wondering what I was going to do in the ring with a heavyweight.

"I was at home and thought about a lot of the heavyweights I used to spar with in Joe Frazier's gym because I couldn't get a lot of boxing as a light heavyweight because they wanted me to pay them and I didn't have any money to pay anybody. So the floor manager said to me, 'Start coming at 12 o'clock and you can box the heavyweights. They should help you out a little bit.' So that's what I started doing. I got a lot of boxing – Mike Koranicki, Marvis Frazier, Tex Cobb. It helped me out.

"[Fitness guru] Mackie Shilstone helped me lose weight as a light heavyweight and gain weight as a heavyweight.

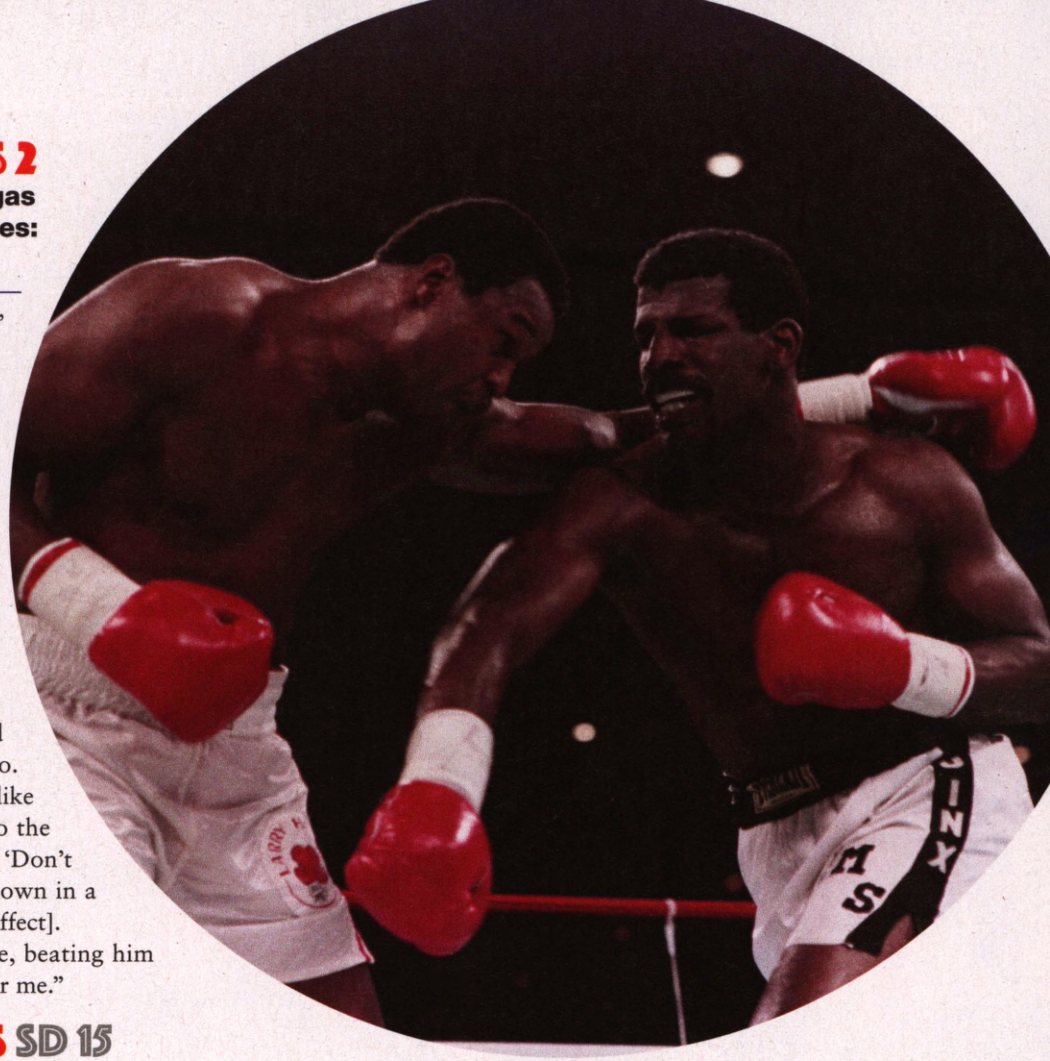
"The fact I wasn't afraid of [Holmes], I went in the ring that way. I was thinking I'd do well with him. I thought of all those heavyweights I sparred at Joe Frazier's gym, so I thought I had a good chance with Larry. I was just as tall as Larry and that helped me out. I had a nice long reach. I was jabbing with him. I took his jab away, because I was pretty good at slipping punches. He didn't hit me that often with his jab.

"I felt I did enough to win, but I didn't know if the judges would rob me and give the fight to Larry. I had beat the heavyweight champ and became the heavyweight champ myself. It was life-changing. A lot of people were congratulating me, but nobody gave me any money." (laughs)

RESULT: SPINKS UD 15

LARRY HOLMES 2

April 19, 1986, Las Vegas Hilton, Las Vegas • Titles: Ring/IBF heavyweight



"I knew I had Larry Holmes' number because I beat him once. All I had to do was try to do it again. I think I had upset him in some way to where he would try to get in the ring and prove himself. I didn't think he could beat me. I was very confident fighting him the second time, and I just felt pretty good.

"I think the second was a better performance. I handled him well in the first fight, too. In the second fight, he acted like he was mad and slung me to the ground. I said to the referee, 'Don't worry about it. He'll slow down in a minute.' Something to that [effect].

"I proved it wasn't a fluke, beating him again. That was very good for me."

RESULT: SPINKS SD 15

GERRY COONEY

June 15, 1987, Convention Center, Atlantic City • Title: Ring heavyweight

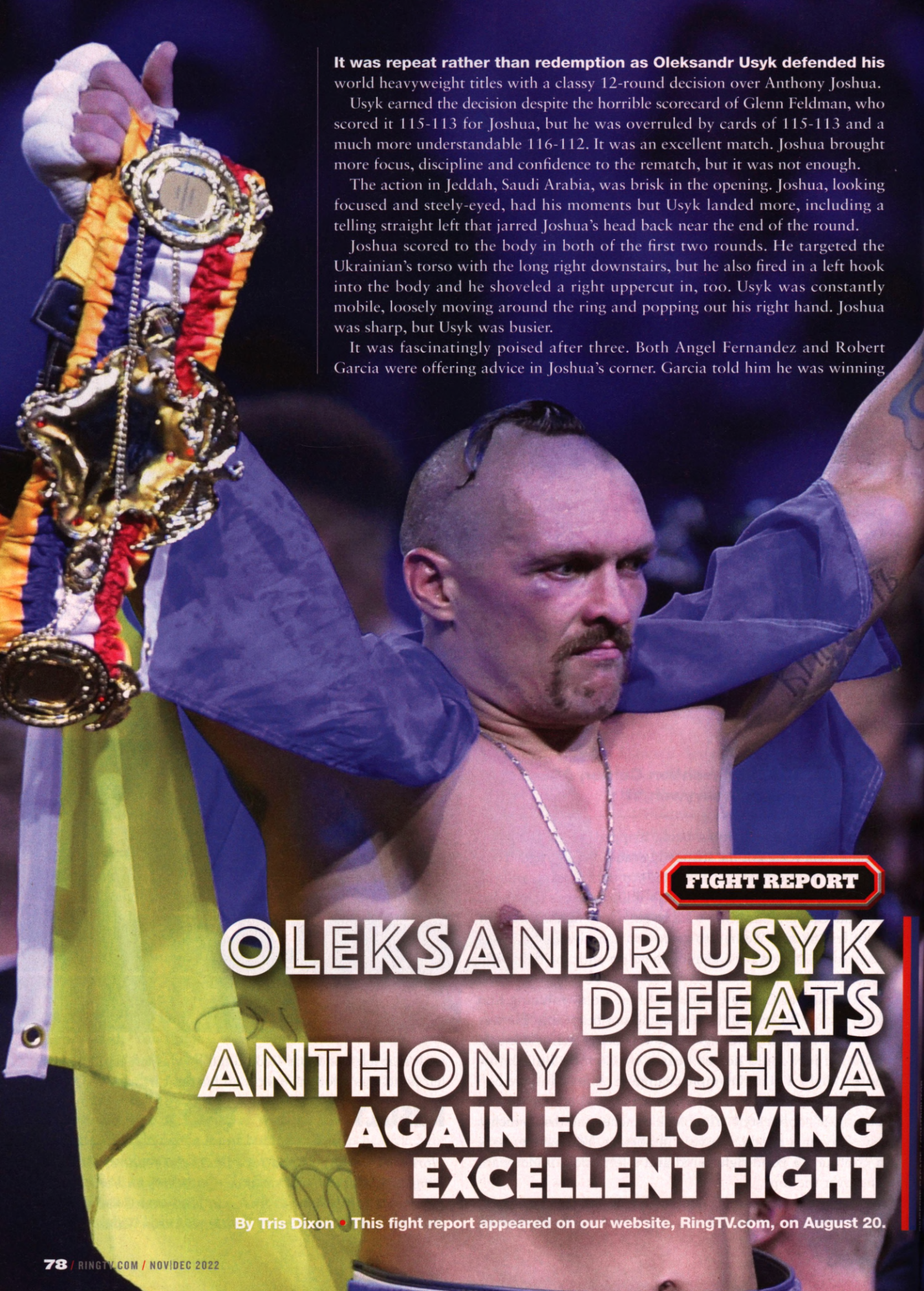
"I didn't know much about being stripped [of the IBF title]. I think Don King got me stripped because I didn't fight Tony Tucker. I would have got $500,000 to fight Tucker, and the guarantee to fight Cooney was $4 million. I was scheduled to fight Cooney, and King tried to get me to fight Tucker for a lot less money. We had to go to court, and we won in the courtroom, so we got a chance to go on with the fight with Cooney.

"I looked at Cooney. I knew of him from watching him box. I knew his style of boxing could not beat mine. He was tall, but I knew my boxing ability was better than Cooney's. I knew I just could not be beaten by Cooney. I did know how to fight. I'm an Olympic champion. Americans, we bob and weave. You have to overpower them with your style in boxing. It's about style. You block punches and dish punches out. Having a good jab is very important. You have to have a good jab, a good right hand and a left hook, underneath and over the top.

"Gerry Cooney was left-handed but he fought like a right-hand fighter. When I got in the ring with him, he slapped me with that left hand and I could tell he was left-handed. His left hand was a lot stronger than his right hand." RING

RESULT: SPINKS TKO 5

Florence Anthony helped coordinate this feature. The Ring appreciated her assistance. Questions and/or comments can be sent to Anson at elraincoat@live.co.uk and you can follow him on Twitter @AnsonWainwright.



It was repeat rather than redemption as Oleksandr Usyk defended his world heavyweight titles with a classy 12-round decision over Anthony Joshua.

Usyk earned the decision despite the horrible scorecard of Glenn Feldman, who scored it 115-113 for Joshua, but he was overruled by cards of 115-113 and a much more understandable 116-112. It was an excellent match. Joshua brought more focus, discipline and confidence to the rematch, but it was not enough.

The action in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, was brisk in the opening. Joshua, looking focused and steely-eyed, had his moments but Usyk landed more, including a telling straight left that jarred Joshua's head back near the end of the round.

Joshua scored to the body in both of the first two rounds. He targeted the Ukrainian's torso with the long right downstairs, but he also fired in a left hook into the body and he shoveled a right uppercut in, too. Usyk was constantly mobile, loosely moving around the ring and popping out his right hand. Joshua was sharp, but Usyk was busier.

It was fascinatingly poised after three. Both Angel Fernandez and Robert Garcia were offering advice in Joshua's corner. Garcia told him he was winning

FIGHT REPORT

OLEKSANDR USYK DEFEATS ANTHONY JOSHUA AGAIN FOLLOWING EXCELLENT FIGHT

By Tris Dixon • This fight report appeared on our website, RingTV.com, on August 20.

every round and advised him to triple the jab and fire the right hook.

Usyk was working frenetically; Joshua was looking to time him with the right hand. The action intensified in the fourth. Usyk's left scored several times, but Joshua stood firm and shot back with his right and a couple of punches landed firmly on Usyk without discouraging him.

In the fifth, Joshua landed downstairs and Usyk indicated it was too low. He took a moment to recover, and when the action resumed, AJ targeted the body again. The Londoner looked like a different proposition this time. His concentration was not wavering. He was more compact and composed and sharper with his shots. Joshua's defense was tighter, too.

It was a mentally taxing affair. Neither could switch off for a moment. Joshua's boot slipped on the canvas in the seventh, but he landed a right shortly afterward. Usyk scored with several shots, although he was not putting power in his punches, either banking on the scorecards or the cumulative effect of what he was landing.

The canvas had to be toweled down as Joshua lost his footing again in Round 8, but his bodywork in the round was stellar until near the end of the session, when he fell short with several attempts and was picked off for his troubles.

The ninth, however, was big for Joshua. He bulled Usyk into an almost constant retreat, outmuscled the champion, thumped the body and forced him to hang on through some rocky moments.

But somehow Usyk started the 10th from where Joshua left off in the previous round. Usyk clipped Joshua with both hands, moved off and did it again. Then Joshua landed a huge right that threatened to turn the fight, but Usyk rode out the storm and finished the round in the ascendancy.

Joshua didn't quit on his body attack in the 11th. He thumped Usyk's midsection with a hurtful right hand and in the 12th he caught the champion with a left hook and another right, but Usyk pinged him back with his own ripostes. Usyk was slippery defensively and dangerous offensively in the last, but Joshua was in it to win until the clock ran out. But Usyk had won and won well, despite Feldman's efforts.

Usyk was tremendous and Joshua was much better than he had been at Tottenham almost a year ago. AJ was far from outclassed and he has plenty left to offer. Joshua let off steam with a bizarre post-fight tirade, while Usyk said he wanted to fight Tyson Fury and that if the Fury bout could not be made, then he might not box again. RING

Joshua tried to use his size more this time, but Usyk was still able to close the distance.

SERIAL THRILLER

TYSON FURY DISCUSSES WHY HE COULDN'T STAY AWAY FROM BOXING AND WHY **OLEKSANDR USYK** HAS NO CHANCE AT KEEPING HIM FROM A THIRD RING CHAMPIONSHIP

By Tom Gray

"The best belt in world boxing has to be won three times to equal Muhammad Ali's record. I haven't done anything bad. I'm just very confident in smashing a middleweight to pieces."

This was Tyson Fury's response when I gently chastised him for "dumping the best title in world boxing."

Did The Ring really believe that Fury would never return?

Don't be silly!

There were three reasons why "The Gypsy King" had us on the hook. First, as our rules state, if a champion officially retires, the title is declared vacant. Second, The Ring's No. 1 and No. 2 heavyweight contenders, Oleksandr Usyk and Anthony Joshua, were set to fight. Third, Fury is unpredictable. The reigning WBC titleholder could have returned in two years or one week. As it turned out, it was the latter.

On August 20, southpaw wizard Usyk scored a repeat points triumph over Joshua at the Jeddah Superdome in Saudi Arabia. With Fury having relinquished his crown, Usyk made history by adding The Ring's heavyweight title to the cruiserweight version he picked up in July 2018. However, around the time the Ukrainian star was having his gloves removed, Fury was already throwing down the gauntlet.

PAINTING BY RICHARD T. STONE

SERIAL THRILLER

"I would annihilate both of them on the same night... fucking shit," was the cry from Fury in Twitterland. "Get your fucking chequebook out, because the Gypsy King is here to stay forever."

Surprise!

The colossal switch-hitter from Manchester is now targeting undisputed honors and a third Ring championship. Was it sneaky? Yes, it bloody well was, but if the possibility of Fury winning yet another Ring belt leads to the first undisputed heavyweight champion since 1999 (Lennox Lewis), then that's a small price to pay, right?

The Ring caught up with Fury in early September to discuss a variety of things. We had a back-and-forth on his recent horseplay – Usyk's ears would most definitely have been burning – and calling out Joshua within the last 24 hours.

Stand back – the touchpaper is now lit:

TYSON FURY: "I've won The Ring heavyweight title twice. Who else do I stand beside?"

THE RING: Floyd Patterson and Muhammad Ali. Ali won it three times.
TF: "OK, one two-timer and one three-timer. That's what I'm chasing. I'm on a quest for greatness, not fucking mediocre."

THE RING: I called you a week prior to Usyk-Joshua 2. This is one of the quotes you gave me: "[Boxing] was fun while it lasted. I had a good 14-year career. I actually boxed for 20 years, from 14 to 34 years old. I've enjoyed it. I've enjoyed the ups and the downs. My career was an Indian summer that just kept giving." Retirement speak. What changed?
TF: "I got bored with retirement. I had five months out of the ring and I changed my mind. Nobody believed me anyway, did they? I would still have passed a lie detector test, though, for sure.

"I vacated the Ring title and I'll now become a three-time Ring champion."

THE RING: Let me test your boxing knowledge. Ali won three Ring championships. Who did he beat to win them?
TF: "Who did he win them off? Emmm, was The Ring title on the line when he boxed Sonny Liston?"

THE RING: Yes, that's the first one.
TF: "He retired for a while, then he came back. Joe Frazier! No. I know Leon Spinks was one of them!"

THE RING: Yes, that's the third one. Who's in the middle?
TF: "It's got to be George Foreman."

THE RING: Very good! You obviously watched Usyk-Joshua 2. The consensus is that it was a bit closer, but Usyk was a clear winner. Why does Usyk give Joshua so many problems?
TF: "He's a smaller guy, more agile, and he's a southpaw.

"Any of these big lumbering heavyweights with slow feet will struggle with Usyk's style. I don't think Joshua could do any better. He tried his best and that's it. There's no shame in losing to a better man on the night. That's what's happened. Usyk is just an all-round better man than Joshua. That's it – end of. If they fought five times, Joshua might win one on a lucky punch. But the law of averages says the smaller,

Fury knocked out Dillian Whyte before a crowd of 94,000 fans.

better boxer beats Joshua every single time."

THE RING: After preparing for Joshua for several months, Usyk wants to spend time with his family. I know you jumped on him for not wanting to fight before the end of the year, but, deep down, given the circumstances in his native country, are you a bit more sympathetic than you're letting on?

TF: "I'm not, because this was a typical shithouse move. Where I come from, you don't call a man out unless you're willing to fight him.

"He said he's been in the gym for six months. I've been in boxing my whole life, studied it forever, and I've never seen anyone do a six-month training camp. No wonder he's injured if he's doing six-month training camps. Do you know how long I'm gonna train for Joshua if that fight comes off? Five weeks. Get in there, knock him out, then on to the next one."

THE RING: You offered Joshua a fight for the WBC and lineal titles. Realistically, that's not going to happen, is it?

TF: "Why's it not gonna happen?"

THE RING: Well, Joshua has lost three of the last five and would be a huge underdog. So there's the strong possibility that he loses four of his last six, which some would say is career-ending. Also, Joshua has signed this multi-fight deal with DAZN and they'll want to realize their investment.

TF: "He would be a massive underdog, so he's in a win-win situation. If everyone expects him to lose and he beats me, then he's back on top and bigger than ever.

"And if he's lost three, what difference does it make if he loses four? Four losses means nothing. Look at Derek Chisora; he's had 12 losses and he's still battling away.

"And in terms of DAZN, the fight can be on BT pay-per-view and DAZN pay-per-view."

THE RING: Joshua is coming off two losses and he's got no belts. What's the split going to be on this fight?

TF: "I know what you're saying, but I would ask for nothing more than champion-challenger privilege."

THE RING: Give me an example. 75-25?

TF: "No, listen, I want to make the fight. I'd offer him 60-40 for champion-challenger. I think that's more than fair."

THE RING: I agree.

TF: "Listen, I'm not going to offer 75-25 like they'd do to me. If the shoe was on the other foot, they would say, 'Well, we'll give you 20 percent.' But because I want this fight to happen, I'm willing to give him 40 percent. And if I took this fight to the WBC, they'd probably say 70-30 in my favor.

"He doesn't have anything and he's coming off two losses, but I see the value in Joshua. Even though he's lost to Usyk, I still think me and AJ in England is bigger than me and Usyk.

"It's 60-40 – there's the deal. Do it or don't do it."

THE RING: Why is Tyson Fury all wrong for Usyk? What would you do that Joshua couldn't do?

TF: "Tyson Fury does what Usyk does, but I'm a bigger, better version of him with knockout power.

"Usyk thinks he's a slick little motherfucker at [220 pounds] and he can box and move. I've been boxing and moving my whole career, but now I just like to knock motherfuckers out.

"I've never met anyone with more speed than me, sparring or fighting. Usyk is a heavyweight at [220 pounds], but he's not faster than me. The fact that he's been a middleweight means he brings up speed. But a middleweight carrying an extra [50 or 60 pounds] won't help their speed."

THE RING: Do you detect a drop in his quickness?

TF: "Absolutely. If a man is [200 pounds] and moves to [220 pounds], he's carrying more muscle and slows down.

"Why is Tyson Fury gonna beat him? Because Tyson Fury is a 6-foot-9, 270-pound wrecking machine who will not stop throwing combinations at a man that can't hurt him.

"Joshua is known to have a dodgy chin. [Usyk] didn't even look like wobbling Joshua in that second fight, and Joshua walked onto everything he threw."

THE RING: Joshua didn't seem to be as vulnerable to Usyk's punch as he was in fight one.

TF: "That's because Joshua just kept his hands up and kept walking forward.

"Listen, we have seen Derek Chisora – a torn up, washed up journeyman – give Usyk all the problems he could handle. Derek is a glorified journeyman with 12 losses, and most of those losses came in a row. He was nip and tuck with Usyk. Seven rounds to five. Usyk was two rounds up on an old journeyman? Please! Also, Mairis Briedis, a man at 5-foot-10 and [200 pounds], almost beat Usyk with an aggressive style. Michael Hunter couldn't miss Usyk for the first few rounds until he ran out of steam.

"It's not like he's a slick southpaw. Look at the face on him after his fights."

THE RING: You came down a little bit in weight for the Dillian Whyte fight – 264 pounds as opposed to 277 for the third Wilder fight. What do you do for Usyk? Stay a bit lower to maintain the agility or pile on the weight to make the size advantage bigger?

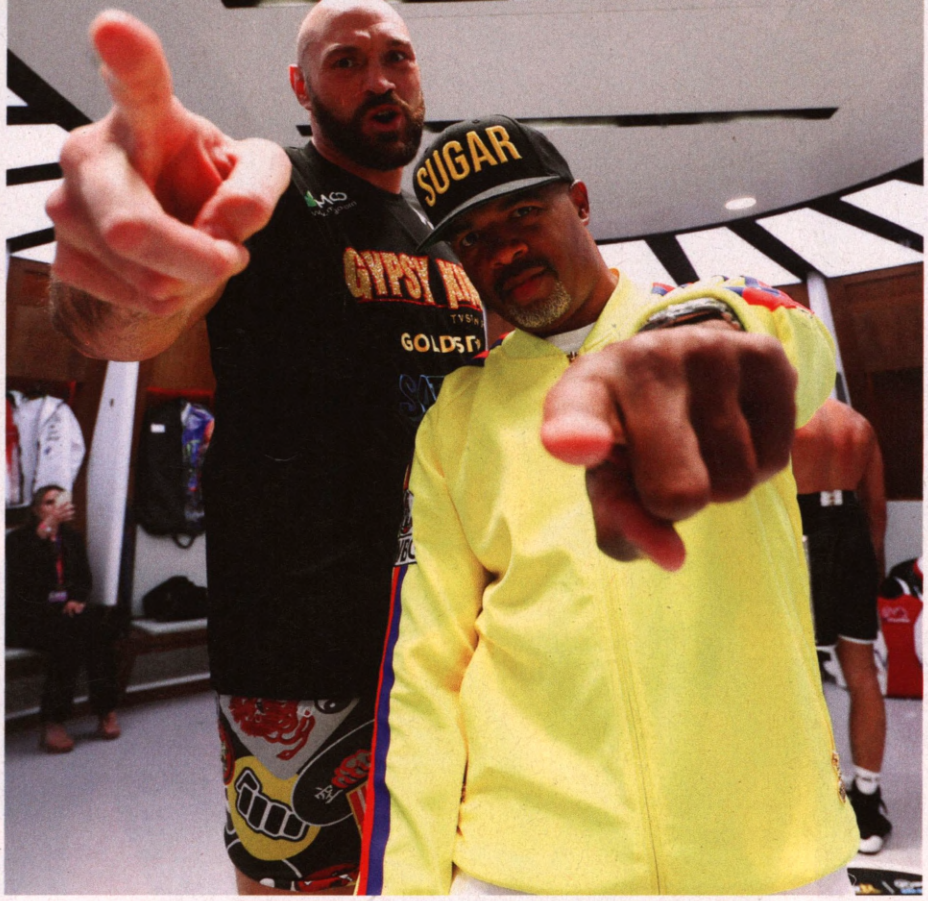
TF: "I'd just stay at whatever weight I'm at in the gym, 265 pounds or something like that.

"I only weighed 277 pounds for Deontay Wilder because I had four weeks training. It was a very tough camp for me. I was on the scales at [300 pounds] when I started four weeks before, so to get down to [277 pounds] was a good drop.

"But with Usyk, he hasn't got faster feet than me at heavyweight. He may have had at middleweight or light heavyweight, but not at heavyweight. I've got more power, double his reach, I'm a foot taller, and I've got more heart. Why do I have more heart? Heart is getting up off the floor and battling on in the 12th round after being knocked unconscious. Heart is getting up twice in Round 4 to bounce a motherfucker off the canvas in Round 11. That's what you call fighting heart.

"I'll do to the little European what Riddick Bowe did to Evander Holyfield in the first and third fights. A good big man will batter a good little man. He is a good little man, but he's not a good big man. He's had four fights at heavyweight: two against the bodybuilder (Joshua), who he could outbox 10 times a week; Chisora, the journeyman; and Chazz Witherspoon, where he was out of ideas. And Chazz was landing on him, marking him up and everything."

Lavish ring entrances have become a hallmark of The Gypsy King.



Trainer SugarHill Steward has made Fury more aggressive.

THE RING: How does Usyk match up against Wilder?
TF: "I think Usyk would be awkward for Wilder for the first three or four rounds but Usyk slows down. We've seen him slow down. We've seen Joshua land on him and hurt him. Wilder would land one punch on him and it would be over by the fifth round. Maybe Usyk can outbox him for up to 10 rounds, but in a 12-round fight you're gonna get hit. I don't care if you're the slickest man alive. As soon as Wilder lands on any of them, goodbye forever."

THE RING: Did you happen to see Andy Ruiz vs. Luis Ortiz?
TF: "I seen highlights. It looked like a pretty good fight."

THE RING: There's talk of Ruiz fighting Wilder, providing Deontay beats Robert Helenius. What do you make of Wilder against Ruiz?
TF: "Well, considering the fact that I don't like Wilder and I do like Andy, I'd wholeheartedly want Andy Ruiz to batter him. However, Wilder is a dangerous man and I don't think Ruiz is slick enough to avoid a punch for 12 rounds. Andy was being hit clean by the 40-whatever-year-old [Ortiz].

"Wilder is always going to land on all these heavyweights, especially the heavy ones, just like he did Ortiz and all the rest. It took Joshua seven rounds to break down Dominic Breazeale. Wilder? It took him one punch.

"I would back Wilder to beat Anthony Joshua. I back him to beat any of them except me. Deontay Wilder, even though he's a piece of shit in my opinion, is still the second-best heavyweight in the world. He'll land the thunder punch. He landed it on me. We had 10 knockdowns in three fights.

"The Gypsy King rules this heavyweight division. Everyone does what I say and I've earned that right. I've stayed undefeated for 14 years. I've took on the hardest fucking challenges possible. I've took out one of the longest reigning champions in history (Wladimir Klitschko) and the biggest puncher in history (Wilder). All I've got to do is set about this middleweight. And do you know what they're gonna say when I win? 'Oh, he was too small, he was never gonna beat Fury!' They're already saying it."

THE RING: Is that frustrating? Is this why you've considered retirement so many times?
TF: "This is what I'm saying.

"But I was sitting at home for five months, doing talk shows and a bit of filming. It was great! But nothing will ever compare with being heavyweight champion of the world and having a bit of banter with the lads. And when I say the lads, I mean everyone else in boxing.

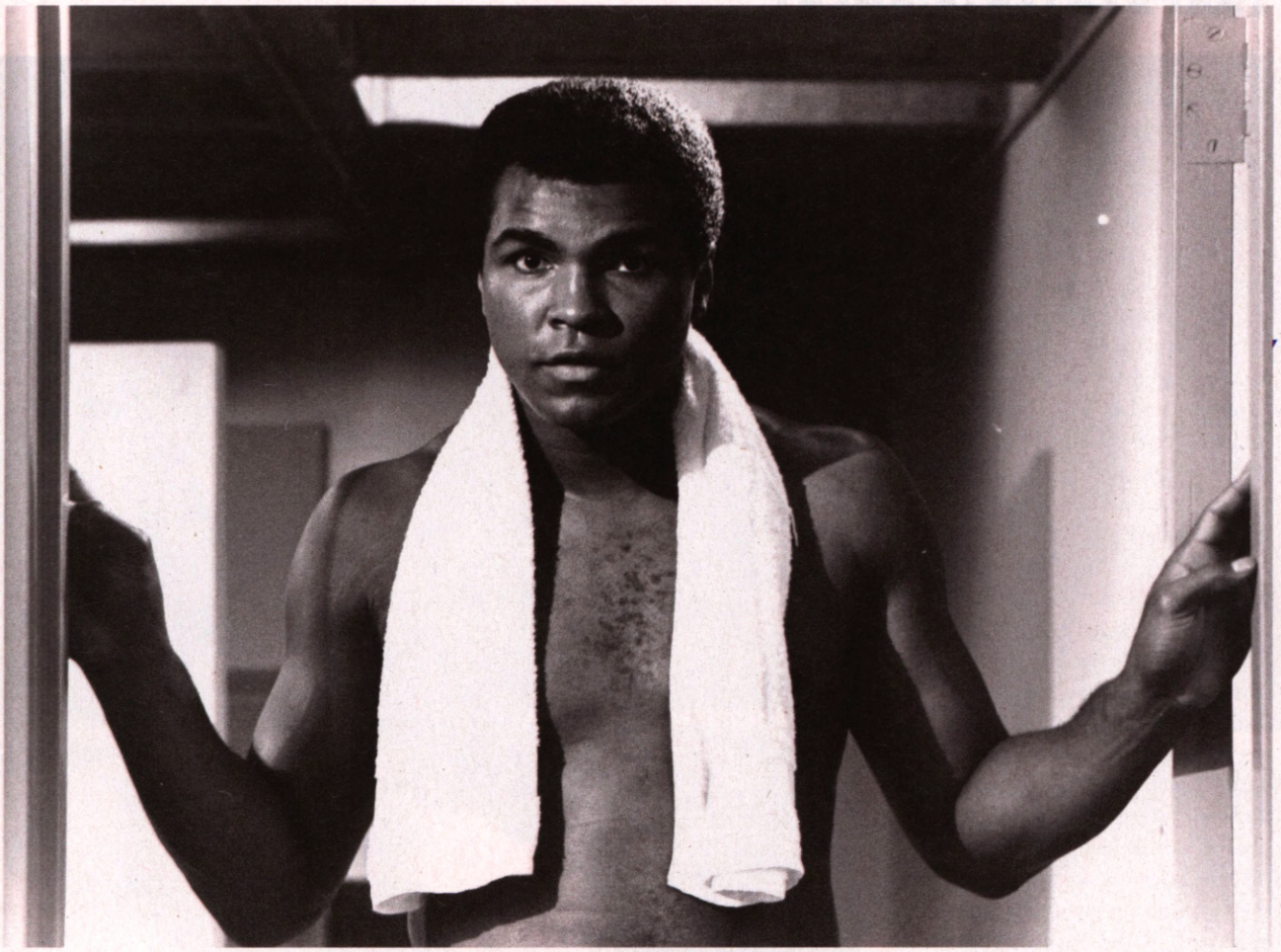
"I love boxing. I absolutely adore it."

THE RING: So will you be around for the foreseeable future? You're 34 years old now.
TF: "I've still got loads of time to do whatever I want. I'll probably become the 'New Mongoose' (in tribute to the 'Old Mongoose,' Archie Moore) and keep boxing at 50 years old. (laughs)

THE RING: There's a lot of people who are very happy that you're not retiring. Have you got a message for them?
TF: "Yes I do. I was away for a minute, but now I'm back. I missed the roar of the crowd and I missed everything about boxing.

"I cannot wait to put on a show during these difficult times. For everyone that's struggling – crisis times and rising energy bills – I want to give everyone hope and another massive event that they can attend. They can have some fun and forget about everything else that's going on in the world. A Tyson Fury fight is bigger than boxing – it's entertainment and fun for the public." RING

Tom Gray is managing editor for Ring Magazine. Follow him on Twitter: @Tom_Gray_Boxing.



THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

PRIZEFIGHTERS HAVE ALWAYS HAD A KNACK FOR MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM RING TO SCREEN

By Christina Newland

Robert De Niro (left) portrayed Jake LaMotta in *Raging Bulll*, while Muhammad Ali (above) played himself in *The Greatest.*

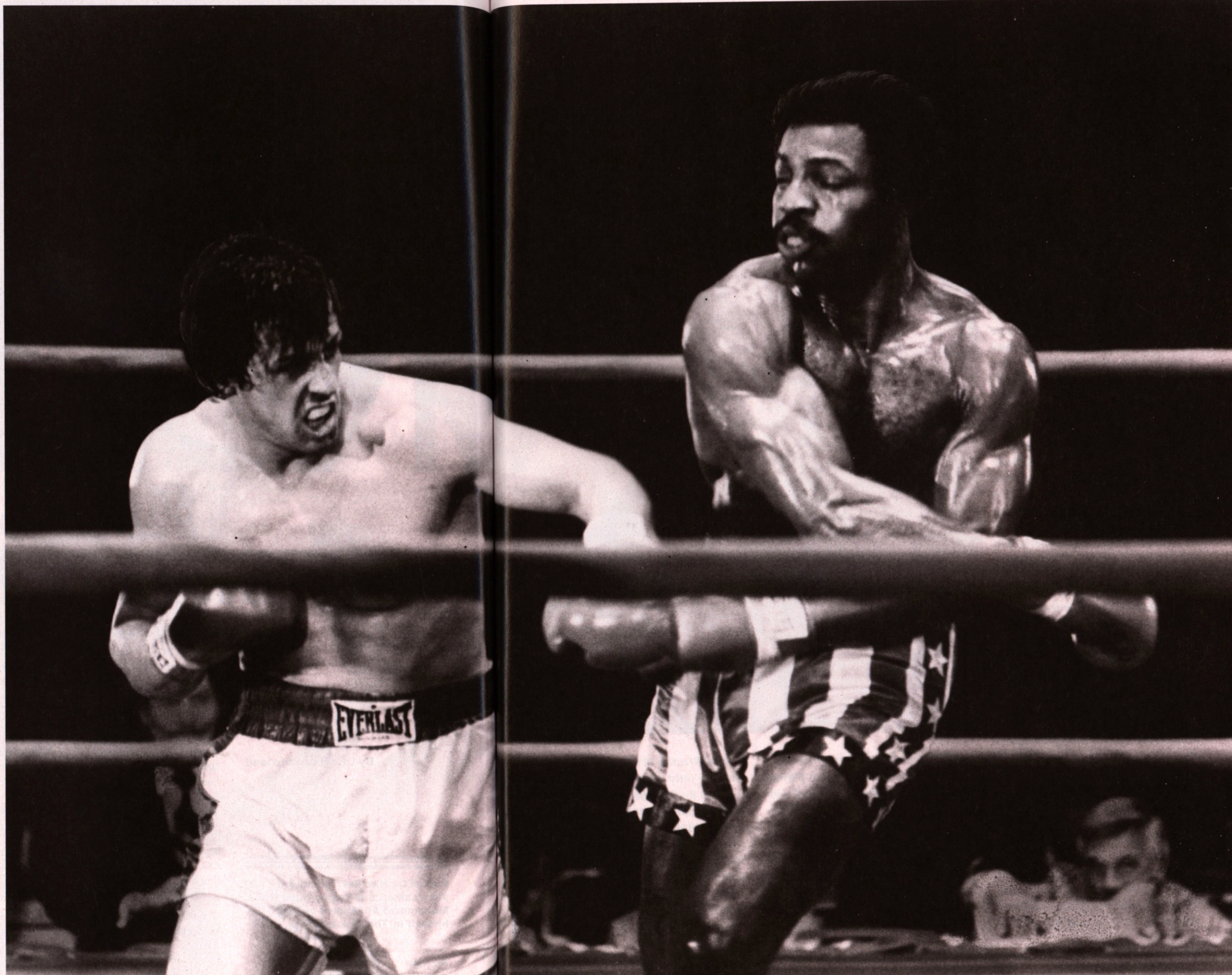
Chris Eubank Sr. swinging a cane and putting on the airs of a country gentleman; Tyson Fury comically bouncing around a press conference in a Batman costume; Canelo Alvarez chanting "payday, payday" at Demetrius Andrade with the sneer of a villain; Mike Tyson flashing a gold tooth in a terrifying, lisping tirade; Gene Tunney reciting Shakespeare. Prizefighters are many, and so are champions; but personality on camera is the showbiz gold that cements legacy and attracts eyeballs. Fighters will tell you that it's not the important part, that what matters is in the ring. Commentators will say that sports personalities are nice, but they don't win belts or athletic respect. But the fact of the matter is that boxing needs stars as much as it needs champions. All the better if they're both rolled into one. The ability to make oneself a villain or a hero for a waiting audience is also a sure sign that a fighter may continue to draw on that charisma to make a career outside of the world of boxing.

You might get the first inkling of that above-and-beyond star quality, for example, at a press conference. Sometimes fighters shuffle and shrug; others flex and showboat. Tyson Fury will always have his rangy ring prowess, but he would not be the Tyson Fury we know without that mile-a-minute mouth and his "you big dosser" banter. It's straight from the Ali playbook (courtesy of Gorgeous George), though Ali wore it so naturally that it's hard to remember

sometimes that he used to rehearse and memorize his witty little poems before saying them to the crowd. Suffice it to say: A great athlete is one thing, but when a persona is created, it's rarely effortless. Memorizing lines, after all, is the province of the actor, not the prizefighter.

In so many ways, the biggest fighters tread a thin line between show business and boxing. That includes everything from television to broadcast radio, comic books to computer games, commercials (hello George Foreman) and advertisements. It might be a highbrow film, like Martin Scorsese's Academy Award-winning Jake LaMotta biopic *Raging Bull*, or it might be as lowbrow as Anthony Joshua's Under Armour ad. Historically speaking, the avenues of money-making for often working-class or immigrant fighters were pretty narrow, and brand endorsements weren't yet on the horizon, so they took what they could. On the other end of the spectrum, Mike Tyson had his NES *Punch-Out!!* game; both he and Fury have cropped up on *WrestleMania*. But if an urge for money or a sense of fun motivates a fighter's decision to take part in other parts of show business, it's cinema where boxing has always met its true match.

There have been few historical occasions in which the heavyweight champion of the world wasn't the most famous man in boxing. And the motion picture was a medium that helped elevate that fame in manifold ways. Even at what was arguably the genesis of modern boxing, Thomas Edison noted that one of the first-ever film stars was, in fact, a prizefighter: James "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, who appeared in the second-ever boxing match to be recorded on film, an 1894 six-round bout with Peter Courtney. As Edison later said, Corbett "can justly claim



Sylvester Stallone and Carl Weathers duke it out in *Rocky*.

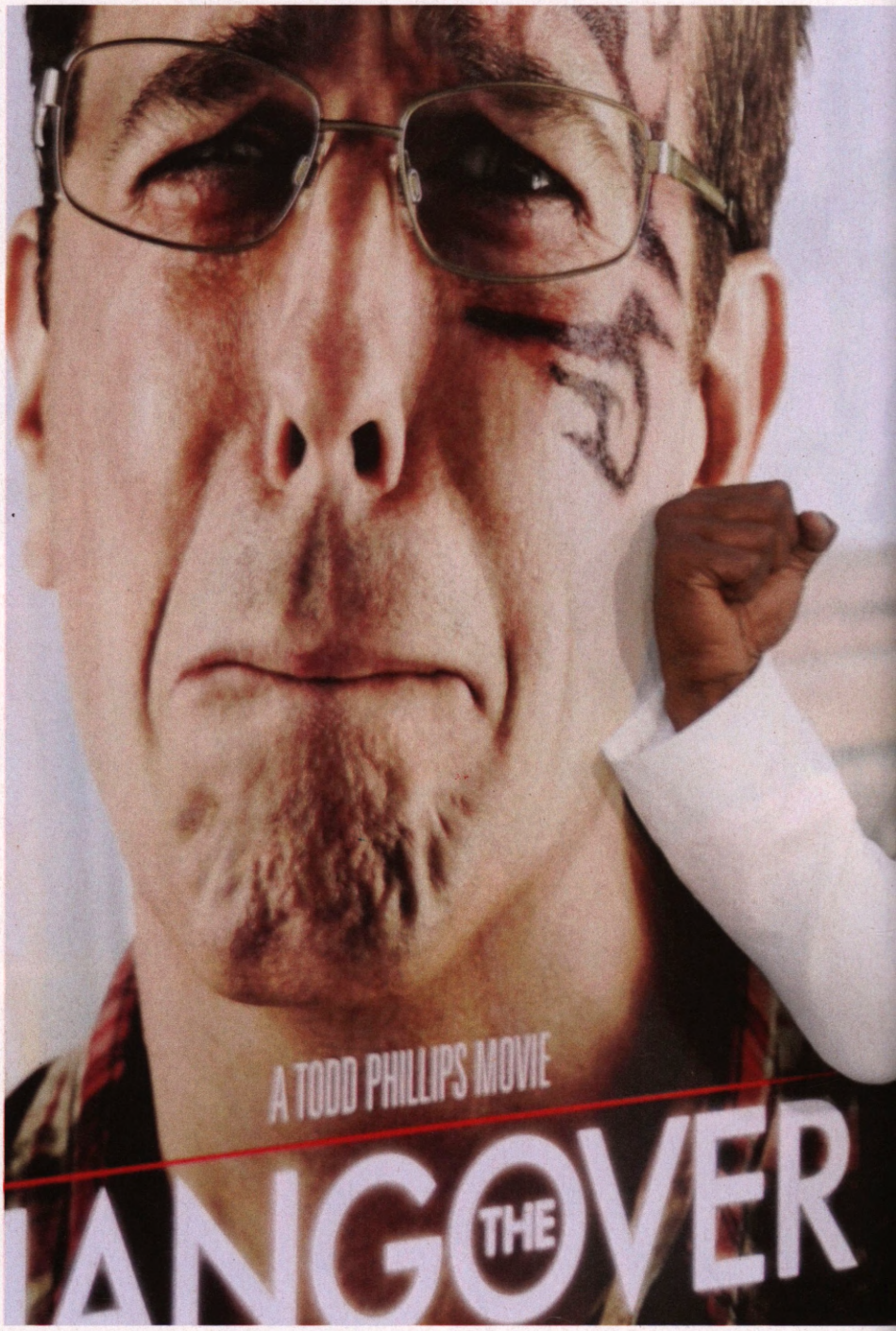
the distinction of being the oldest living film star." Even the most casual viewer can probably list a dozen boxing movies of varying quality, from *Rocky* and the recent *Creed* spin-offs all the way back to films by Charlie Chaplin.

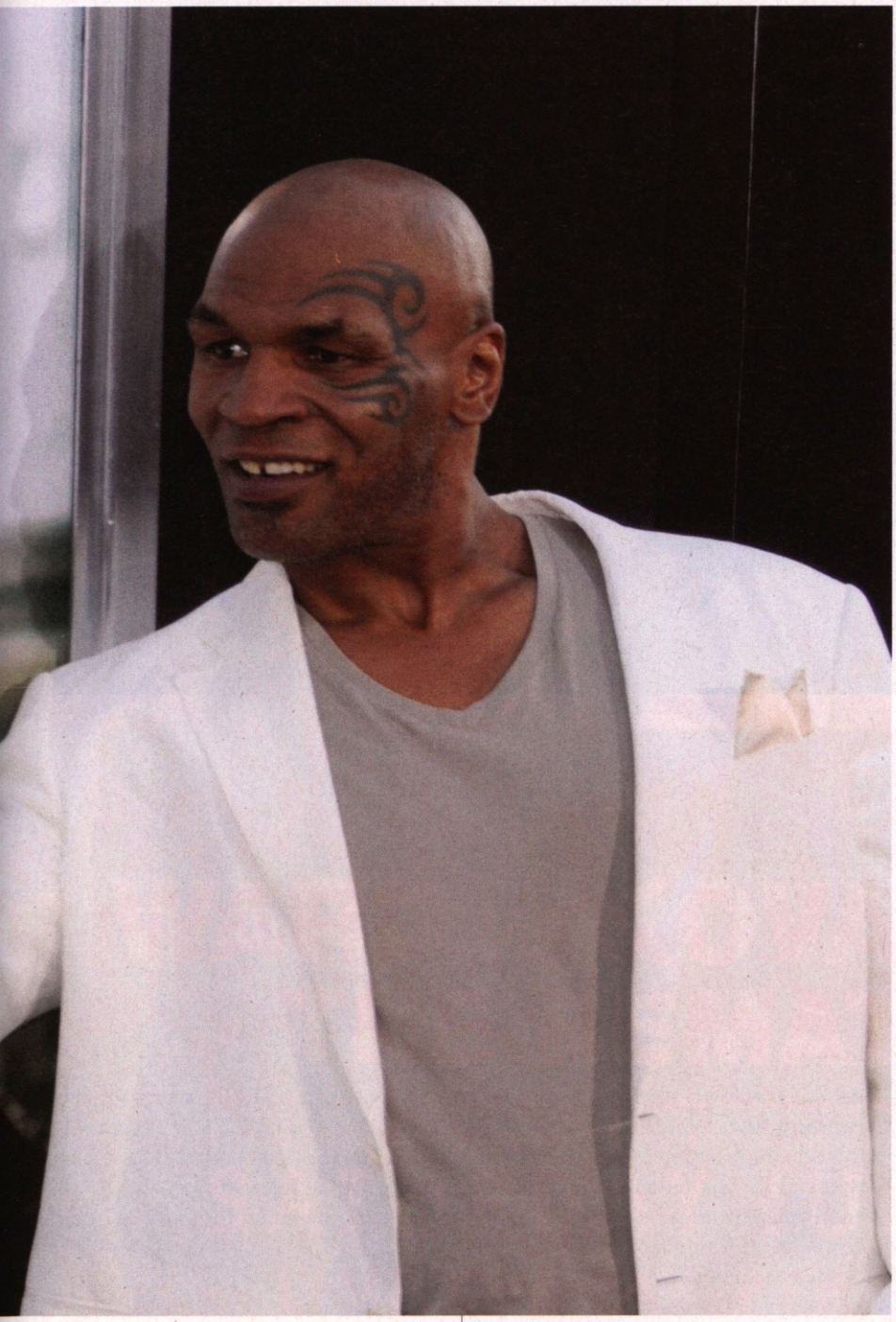
Heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey – and as it goes, the first-ever Ring beltholder – was one of the most famous men in the world in his heyday, holding the title from 1919 to 1926. As early as 1920, Dempsey appeared in a film serial known as *Daredevil Jack*, a series of silent adventure movies where he was the hero of the story. Few of the films have survived today, but the idea – borrowing a superstar athlete's fame to carry a film – would create a format for Hollywood to copy over the course of the 20th century. Even if a fighter wasn't as front and center as Dempsey was, they could be counted on to add the requisite muscle, glamour and name recognition to the movie marquee.

In the early 1930s, Max Baer – world heavyweight champion from June 1934 to June 1935 – appeared in numerous films, even being built up by studio publicity in Hollywood as a genuine screen actor and heartthrob. One piece of publicity for the 1933 film *The Prizefighter and The Lady* proclaims: "Okay, boys, you got an eyeful of Mae West – and now it's the ladies' turn to get excited!" Baer starred in the film opposite bona fide movie siren Myrna Loy, and the supporting cast included Dempsey and upcoming opponent Primo Carnera (the infamous "man mountain" whose crooked rise to the heavyweight championship was lightly fictionalized by Budd Schulberg for his brilliant prizefight novel *The Harder They Fall*).

Baer was far from the only fighter to take a shot at a big screen career. Maxie Rosenbloom – a Ring Magazine light heavyweight champ who got the nickname "Slapsie Maxie" for his open-handed punching style – was a popular comedian and supporting actor of the mid-century. Rosenbloom played heavies in gangster films and old pugs in TV movies like the excellent *Requiem for a Heavyweight* (1956). After all, if a casting director wanted a great, craggy face that people might vaguely recognize in your tough-guy movie, a guy like Maxie was probably a go-to. Muhammad Ali was enough of a star to play himself in *The Greatest* (1977); I'd argue he was the only man really up to the job. The *Rocky* series also saw its fair share of cameos, from Joe Frazier to Tommy Morrison.

Even today, boxers crop up in things with pretty astounding regularity. Mike Tyson's memorable cameo in *The Hangover* (2009), featuring a pet tiger and Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight," comes to mind





Mike Tyson made a memorable appearance in *The Hangover*.

first. But plenty of lesser names have had prolific screen careers too; take Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini, the WBA lightweight titleholder from 1982 to 1984, and his prolific career in film has included a remake of noir boxing classic *Body & Soul* (1999) as well as his founding of a production company. Most recently, former WBC welterweight titleholder Victor Ortiz appeared in the Jake Gyllenhaal film *Southpaw*, while British former WBC cruiserweight titleholder Tony Bellew is a vicious antagonist in *Creed*.

All of this begs the question: Why is this jump so common? It might be that fighters have been practicing their own form of performance for the camera for years, and though you might say this of athletes in other sports, few have singular attention in the individual way that a prizefighter does. (And that's before the ring walk, itself a spectacle of blockbuster proportions in the hands of a Canelo Alvarez or an Anthony Joshua.) Physicality, too, plays a part in matters; the best fighters are experts at the geometry of movement, of the swing of an arm or the elegant feint, and so too the best actors are defined by gesture, posture, gait and movement. They must convince the entire world – opponent included – that they are not only fearsome but unstoppable. It's psychological as much as physical, in just the same fashion as acting.

I had a brief chat with former WBA and IBF junior welterweight titleholder Amir Khan recently, and he agreed that in order to truly succeed on the thin line between boxing and showbiz, there's a degree of performance that comes into it. "If you've got your opponent in front of you, and he wants to knock your head off, you have to show you're confident. Some people might take that the wrong way and say you're arrogant. But we have to put an act on," he says. "We are different people away from the cameras. Adrien Broner on camera is really arrogant. In person, he's a nice guy. Really nice and respectful. But we have to entertain people and let our characters be liked or be hated."

If performance is always a key part of boxing, and its biggest characters have always been on the larger-than-life side, it's only logical that the motion picture business would be the next step for so many of them. Whether it's the countless boxing biopics and documentaries that hit screens every year, or the steady trickle of prizefighters on all levels of the sport into screen careers, it's fair to say that the mutually beneficial relationship between the actor and the boxer is not set to change anytime soon.

THE BIRTH OF A PROMOTER

KATHY DUVA'S NAME IS ENSHRINED IN THE INTERNATIONAL BOXING HALL OF FAME, BUT FOR MANY YEARS EVEN SHE DIDN'T KNOW THE STORY OF HOW HER JOURNEY BEGAN

By Joseph Santoliquito

As far back as Kathy Duva can remember, she recalls her parents reading her a children's book about a couple who went to this big, white room full of babies nestled in cradles, and they picked out the one they liked best. That was Duva's first understanding of where babies come from. It was also Frank and Pauline Martone's way of letting their little girl, the infant they picked out in Dover, New Jersey, know her history.

She was adopted.

It surprised many who have known Duva for decades when she spoke of her adoption during her induction speech at the International Boxing Hall of Fame last June in Canastota, New York, where her plaque will be placed next to that of her late husband, Dan. Looking over Kathy's lifelong journey to Canastota, though, being embraced by strangers kind of fits, especially when you consider the wacky, twisting, turning culture of boxing. She's often been the stable eye of the storm. A graduate of Montclair State with a bachelor's degree in English, she and Dan created Main Events in 1979. When Dan, the son of legendary trainer Lou Duva, passed away from brain cancer in 1996, Kathy took over as Main Events' CEO. She went back to school to study law at Seton Hall.

She raised her three children – Nicole, Lisa and Bryan – as she attended law school while navigating the helter-skelter world of boxing, fielding calls at all times of the night from promoters, managers and boxers. She graduated with

WARD vs KOVALEV 2:
THE REMATCH
UNIFIED LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
SATURDAY JUNE 17
LIVE ON PAY-PER-VIEW
MANDALAY BAY | LAS VEGAS
MANDALAY BAY
Corona
MONSTER
HBO PPV

honors in 2001.

As a child, Kathy could feel the looks on the back of her neck because of the distinct physical difference between her and her parents. She may have had suspicions she was not the biological daughter of Frank and Pauline, who didn't hide it from her. However, having an inkling is one thing; accepting it came bluntly.

Pauline died when Kathy was 7 and Frank remarried. Her stepmother, Frances, dropped the sledgehammer one day when Duva was 8. Duva was having an emotional outburst during a lunch break from school, unspooling the mantra of stepchildren: "You're not my real mother. I don't have to listen to you." To which Frances replied, "She wasn't your real mother, either." Kathy countered, "What do you mean she wasn't my real mother?"

Very coldly, Frances told her, "Oh, they adopted you."

"It didn't upset me, because I had always been indoctrinated with it and had been told my whole life," remembered Kathy, now 69 and a breast cancer survivor. "I just didn't fully grasp it, because my childhood situation was different than everybody else's. By then, at 8, I understood where babies came from, but I never really put it together that I was adopted. That day I did. I remember telling my friend as I walked back to school that I was adopted. She said, 'Yeah, I know. Everybody knows.'

"But Frank and Pauline were my parents. They loved and raised me."

Without them, Duva probably wouldn't be in the Hall of Fame and her story would not be told here.

Who knows what would have happened to Laura Anne Timmons?

That was Kathy's birth name.

Jerry Zaccardi and Nancy Kelly, who had a few names that she went by and was born Anne Josephine Timmons, were not exactly Ozzie and Harriet. Zaccardi's gambling burned through two auto shops, and serial philandering produced at least two children out of wedlock – one of them being Kathy – that anyone knows about. He was a suave, bronzed World War II veteran with a wandering eye. At 15, he lied about his age to join the U.S. Navy. He later went on to invent a sensor that told if a bumper got too close to another car and sold it to Ford. He played minor league baseball and could have made the majors if he didn't blow out his arm. He had five children with his wife; through her biological father, Kathy has three living siblings: Jerry, Ron and Nancy. Zaccardi died in his 80s.

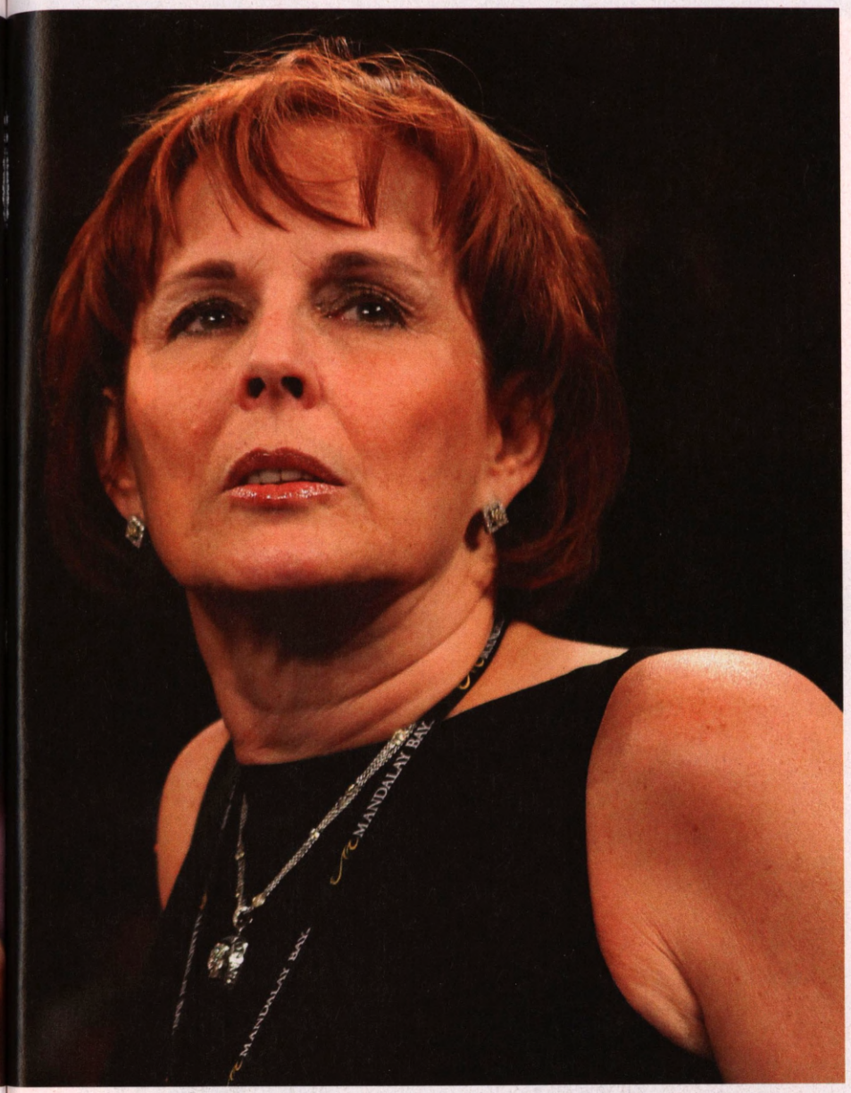
Nancy Kelly was 17 when she had Kathy in 1953. Being a teenage mother, especially one raised Irish Catholic, was incredibly taboo for that era. Compounding her situation was that Nancy Kelly lived on the very same Jersey City block as the local Catholic church and school. She was banished to live with her sister in Dover, New Jersey, which explains why it's on Kathy's adoption papers.

Nancy was a tiny spitfire of a woman who made a buck as a cocktail waitress and lounge singer. She was also "connected." In 1969, her connections led to owning a corner bar-restaurant called Kelly's Grove on Patterson Plank Road in the Heights section of Jersey City. This was a time when there were town ordinances that prevented women from even being in the bar portion of bar-restaurants. Nancy didn't care. She was a maverick. She "knew people" and possessed such temerity that she would throw out drunk patrons on her own, Kathy was told.

After giving Kathy up, Nancy never tried looking for her. Though every once in a while, Kathy was told by her newly found relatives, family kitchen talk would turn to the baby Nancy gave up.

Nancy's lifestyle eventually caught up to her and she died of cirrhosis at just 53 years old. She accomplished incredible things for her time but did not have a happy life, according to

Evander Holyfield signed with Main Events after the 1984 Olympics.



Duva was instrumental in the career of former champ Zab Judah.

what Kathy knows. Kathy has one sibling through her biological mother, her brother Bobby.

Frank Martone, Kathy's adoptive father, was the first college graduate in his family. He obtained his college degree through the G.I. Bill and went on to become an insurance salesman. His wife, Pauline, was a college graduate who served during World War II as an Army nurse. Kathy was encouraged as a child to go to college and was told that she could be whatever she wanted to be.

It's mind-bending to imagine the other paths her life could've taken.

"I got lucky, very lucky with all my parents," she said. "It's hard to say what my path would have been like if I wasn't adopted. My father [Frank] told me I was going to college. It was not an option. In the end, I think I would still have the same drive I have, but I can't say if I would have wound up in the Hall of Fame or if my biological parents would have pushed me to go to school. I don't know. It would have been such a different environment.

"There is some Nancy Kelly in me and I'm very proud of that. My father Jerry ran his own business and my brothers tell me he competed in the second Daytona 500 and invented a device that was bought by Ford. He was an intelligent man. He was clearly very smart and very capable. I'm very proud of that. My [biological] parents were both remarkable people who had flaws. I got stuff from both sides. I'm just grateful that I didn't get their addictions. They all came up in a different time.

"My brothers are highly intelligent and responsible. My sister is the same. Ron is pretty extraordinary, going back to run the family business when my father suffered a stroke. Ron supported his parents for many, many years. What's more remarkable at this stage of my life is these strangers have taken me in 60-odd years later, including relatives in Ireland, not to mention the people here. That's even more compelling."

It had a lot to do with Kathy's daughters, Nicole and Lisa. In the early 2000s, Kathy tried a few adoption databases to find out about her past, to no avail. Nicole and Lisa urged Kathy to keep trying. In 2016, Nicole found the 23andMe website, which compares DNA profiles. Nicole soon found an email alert that the website found a match. It wound up being a dead end.

The second hit came in early July 2017, a cousin on her father's side. The news coincided with Kathy losing her childhood friend Liz Pegel to cancer. Kathy Googled the cousin. Regrettably, she found the cousin's obituary from the same week.

Strike two.

The third connection came in May 2018. Finally, a breakthrough. Nancy Milbauer was her paternal sister, Jerry's daughter.

"I was very excited to meet Nancy, and she was too," Kathy recalled. "She was 71. She knew she had a brother out of wedlock, and she said knowing her father, there might have been others out there."

Nancy and Kathy met on June 29, 2018, Kathy's birthday, at a small restaurant in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Nancy was already seated when Kathy arrived. A bond was forming through prior conversations on the phone. They spoke in person for four hours, poring over everything, showing each other pictures on their phones.

In December 2018, Nicole knocked on Kathy's office door with more impactful information: "Guess what," Nicole said. "I found your mother."

Nicole put Kathy in touch with Kim, the daughter of Bobby Kelly, her maternal brother.

"Kim told me about her father and she told me a story about how she found out I existed, because neither side knew I existed," Kathy said. "Kim told me about a family party, when she was very young, overhearing the women talking over drinks in the kitchen one night about how my mother gave up a child.

"She told my brother Bobby that she wanted to go looking for me. Kim and Nicole came up as a match as cousins. That's what started it."

Kathy invited Bobby and his family on Saturday, December 22, 2018, to her home in Little Falls, North Jersey. What's interesting is when Kathy opened the door to meet the brother she never knew she had, they were wearing identical clothes.

"I decided to change into a red V-neck cashmere sweater with black pants, and I opened the door and I see my brother Bobby wearing a red sweater and black pants," Kathy said. "We spent a lot of time that night getting to know each other, and [hearing] stories about my mother.

"There was a big resemblance in our children when they were young. There was so much stuff to take in. You meet and talk to Bobby and it's as if you've known him your whole life."

Kathy's extended family was there for her induction in June. When she said "so this weekend, this adopted only child is joined by two brothers, my sister, two nieces, assorted cousins, their spouses" during her speech, it threw off a few boxing people who didn't know.

"I felt throughout my whole life as if I was dropped from outer space," she said. "I had no concept of where I came from or how I got here. That was it. My adopted parents' families, they were my family. But I definitely knew something was different. I knew my cousins and I weren't related. No one treated me any different than they would have; they just knew. My father was 40, my mother was 37 when they adopted me.

"All my aunts and uncles were way older, and my cousins were old enough to be my parents. I didn't have anyone I was particularly close with. To find this whole network of people who care about me out of nowhere and being accepted by them is astonishing.

"Especially after having lost Liz, who was like my sister. When Liz was dying, she was going crazy telling me how I should start dating and trying to find a friend for me. We were best friends since we were 14. Clearly, she was trying to prepare me. Losing her and finding all of these people in my life I don't find as a total coincidence."

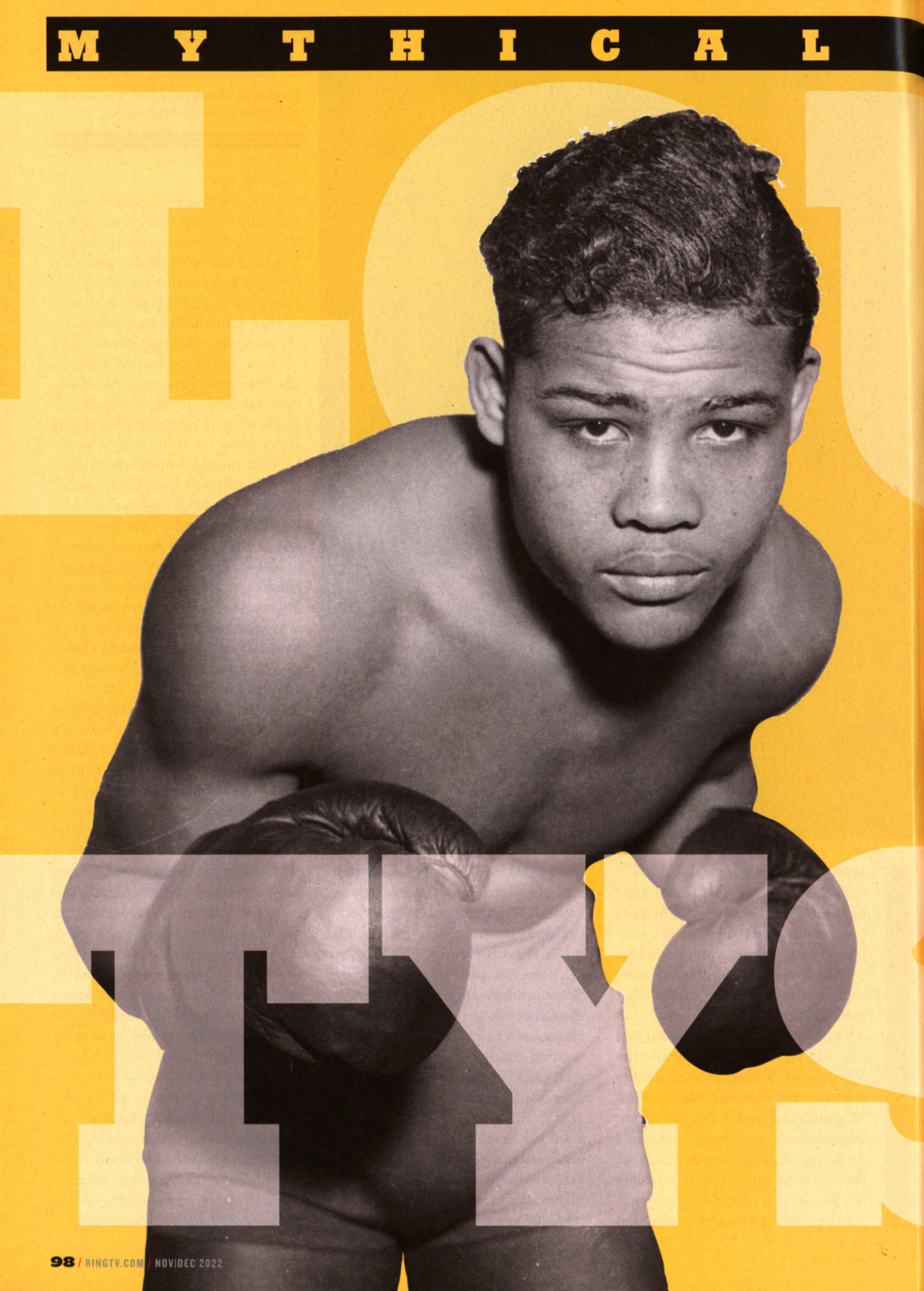
Joseph Santoliquito is an award-winning sportswriter who has been working for Ring Magazine/RingTV.com since October 1997 and is the president of the Boxing Writers Association of America. He can be followed on Twitter @JSantoliquito.

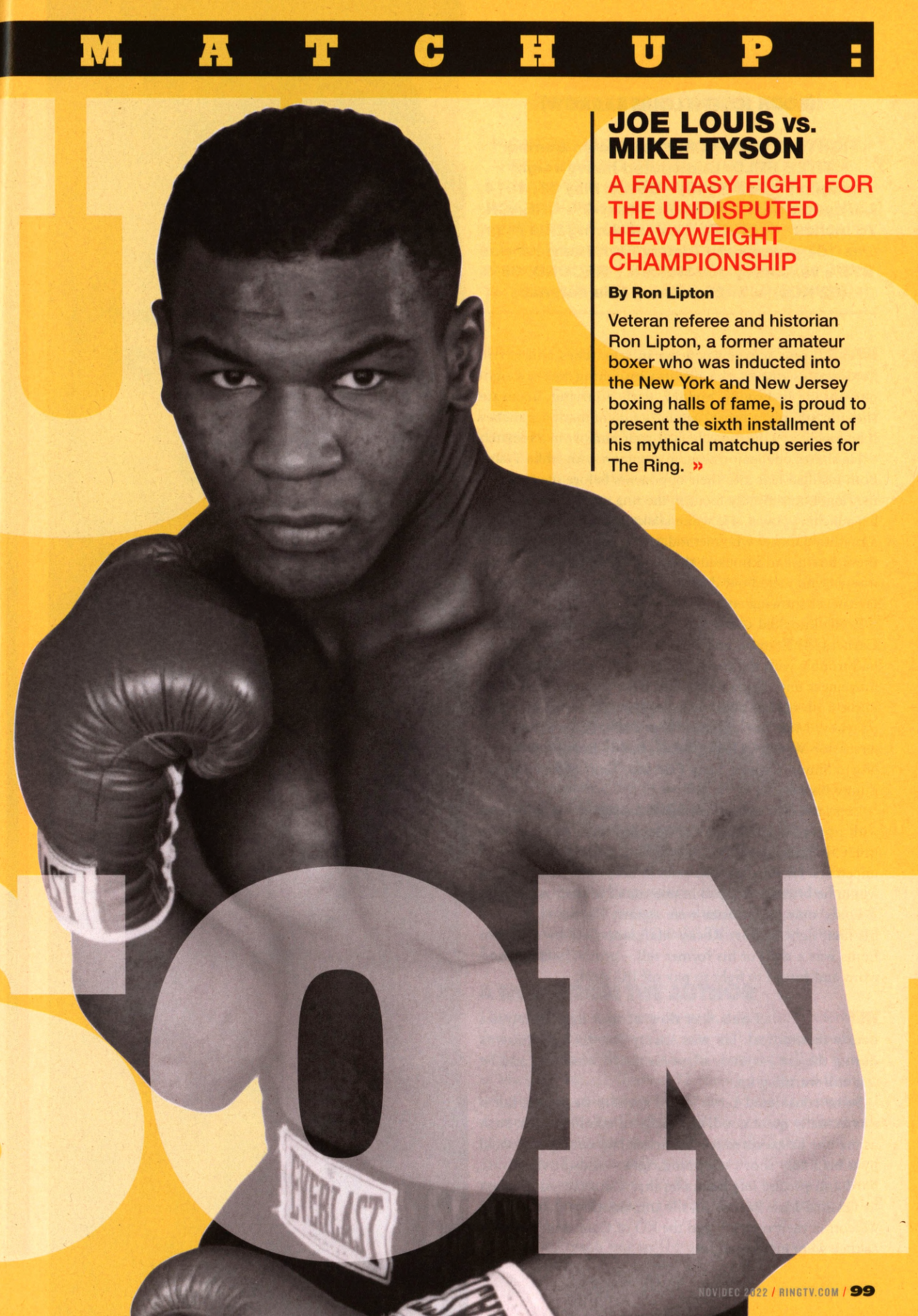
JOE LOUIS vs. MIKE TYSON

A FANTASY FIGHT FOR THE UNDISPUTED HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPIONSHIP

By Ron Lipton

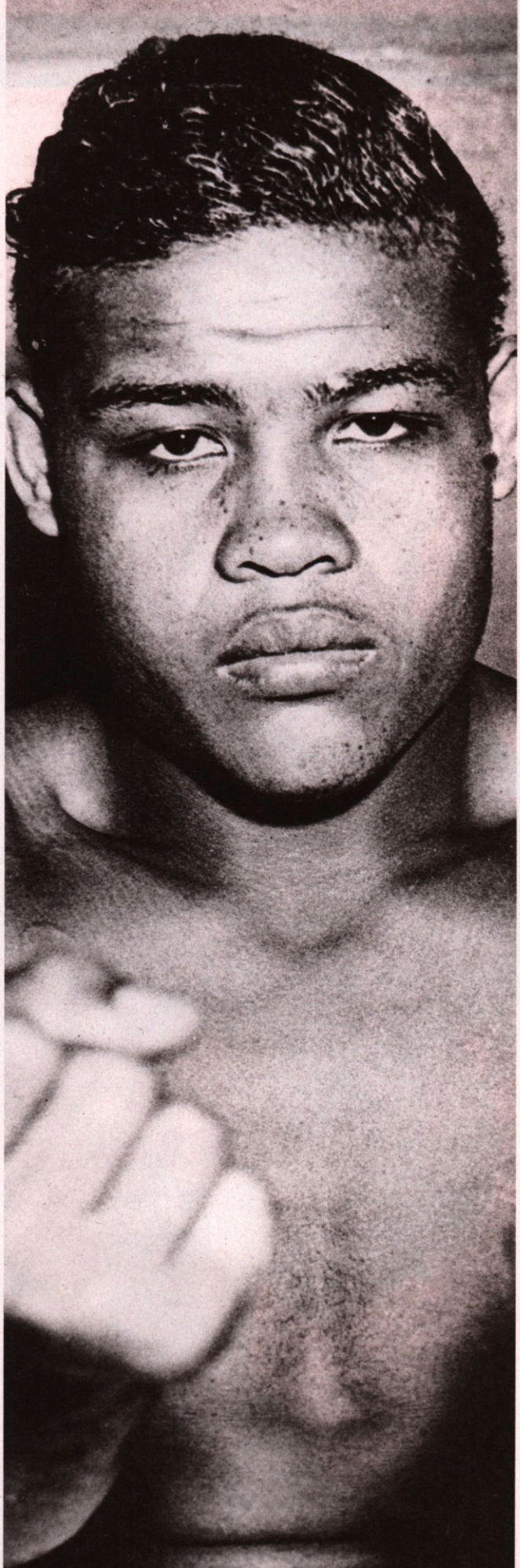
Veteran referee and historian Ron Lipton, a former amateur boxer who was inducted into the New York and New Jersey boxing halls of fame, is proud to present the sixth installment of his mythical matchup series for The Ring. »





JOE LOUIS
(BORN JOSEPH LOUIS BARROW)

FIGHTING MONIKER: "The Brown Bomber" • TITLE HELD: Undisputed heavyweight champion (1937-1949) • BORN: May 13, 1914, LaFayette, Ala. • HEIGHT: 6-foot-1½ • REACH: 76 inches • WEIGHT: Lowest during title reign was 197 pounds vs. Tommy Farr; heaviest was 213½ vs. Jersey Joe Walcott • RECORD: 66-3 (52 KOs) with 25 winning title defenses



NOTES: Louis was devastating in rematches and is still heralded as one of the hardest-punching heavyweight champions in boxing history, with a jarring, accurate shotgun jab and a brutal arsenal of combination punches. If he fought you one time, he had your number in a rematch.

He shares one major thing in common with Mike Tyson: Both instilled fear into their opponents before they entered the ring. Louis' deadly focus in the ring was chilling, as was his punching power. He was a stalking destruction machine, a rhythm puncher who methodically hunted his prey, broke them down and knocked them out. He was a consistent winner who meted out drastic punishment with a deadpan face never showing emotion.

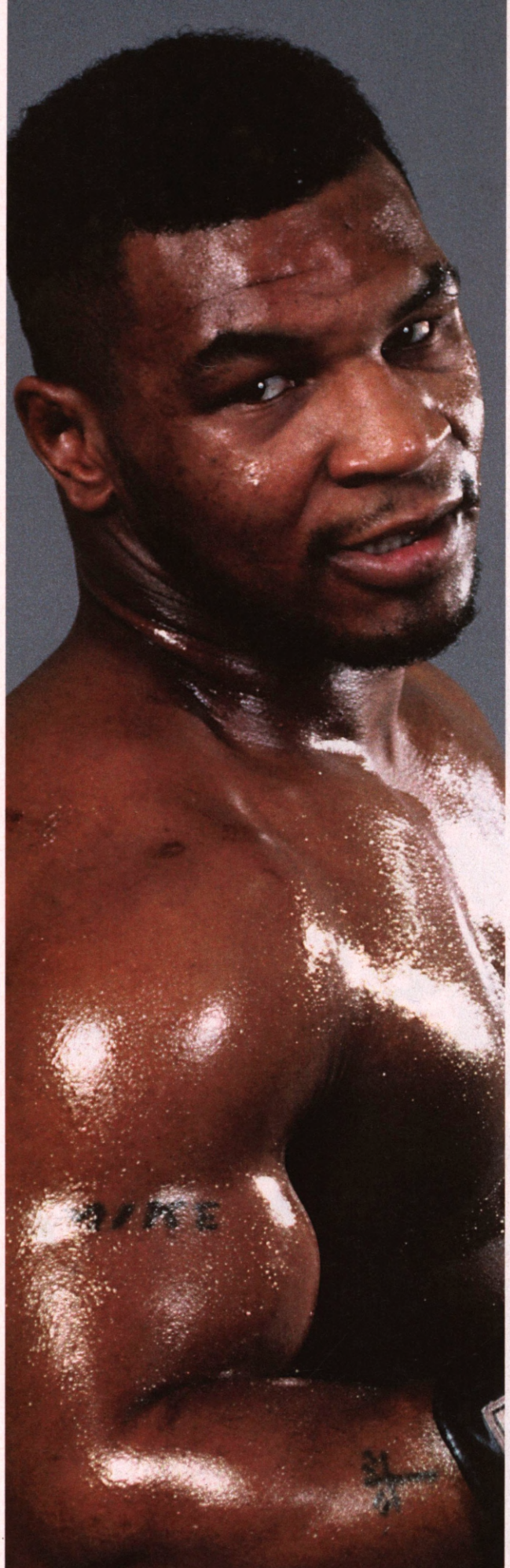
Louis knocked out much bigger men – such as Primo Carnera, Abe Simon and Buddy Baer – with ease, but he had trouble with the smaller Billy Conn's speed and lateral movement until Conn decided to trade punches with Louis in the 13th round. Louis beat heavyweight luminaries Jack Sharkey, Max Baer, Jimmy Braddock, Max Schmeling, Jersey Joe Walcott, Conn (twice), Buddy Baer (twice), Lou Nova, Simon (twice), Tony Galento, Tami Mauriello and Jimmy Bivins.

Louis usually caused great facial damage to his opponents with ripping combinations or knocked them out cold with great finishing power in his right hand, left hooks and uppercuts. He only lost one bout in his prime, to Schmeling, whom he brutally stopped in one round in their rematch.

Louis' only other losses were against Charles (L 15) and his final fight against Rocky Marciano (KO by 8), when Louis was a shell of his former self – portly, balding, ring-worn and forced to fight to pay off IRS debt.

WEAKNESSES: Louis was slow of foot and sometimes overly methodical. He was susceptible to knockdowns during the early rounds when his guard wasn't up and he was still warming up.

Some considered Louis' hand speed a weakness, but it was actually quite good, especially in combinations, such as the one he executed to take Schmeling out – punctuated by a blazingly short, chopping right – and the three fast, hard and precise left hooks he threw in succession when he finished Max Baer. Also, the combinations that finished Walcott in their rematch and the KO of Conn were as quick as they were pulverizing.



MIKE TYSON
(BORN MICHAEL GERARD TYSON)

FIGHTING MONIKER: "Iron Mike" • TITLES HELD DURING REIGN AS HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION (1986-1990): Ring, IBF, WBA, WBC • BORN: June 30, 1966, Brooklyn, N.Y. • HEIGHT: 5-foot-10 • REACH: 71 inches • WEIGHT: Lowest during title reign was 215¾ pounds vs. Larry Holmes; heaviest was 221¼ vs. Trevor Berbick • RECORD: 50-6 (44 KOs)

NOTES: One of the greatest heavyweight champions in boxing history. Exciting, aggressive, intimidating fighter who beat Trevor Berbick, Michael Spinks, Frank Bruno, Carl "The Truth" Williams, Pinklon Thomas, Tony Tucker, James "Bonecrusher" Smith, Donovan "Razor" Ruddock (twice), Jose Ribalta, Larry Holmes, Andrew Golota, Lou Savarese, Tony Tubbs and Alex Stewart, among others.

Tyson had an uncanny ability to pivot with great speed, delivering punches from all angles, and had superb, elusive head movement. He also possessed an amazing ability to get inside against taller opponents and deliver knockout shots. He could end a fight at any moment with his one-hit quitter punches. Included in this deadly arsenal: an explosive right cross, compact left hooks and a unique and powerful double right uppercut – to the body and head – in almost one fluid motion.

WEAKNESSES: Over-the-top temper, partying lifestyle and personal problems, which robbed him of speed, conditioning and focus. Lost the will to win when things did not go his way in the ring.

After a meteoric rise in boxing while adhering to strict training, Tyson left trainer Kevin Rooney and then mixed partying with training. He was also grief-stricken upon losing his mentors Cus D'Amato and Jimmy Jacobs, whom he loved and flourished with.

If taken into the deep waters of the late rounds, Tyson's power seemed to wane, as displayed against Mitch "Blood" Green, James "Quick" Tillis, Tucker, Smith and Buster Douglas.

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

This matchup is a fantasy. As such, pop-culture references and boxing figures from all eras will be mixed freely in scenes we would like to see. This contest will be fought at Madison Square Garden, 12 rounds for the undisputed heavyweight championship of the world at a mythical moment in time. Both fighters will be fighting at the zenith of their career rather than after a specific fight.

I met Joe Louis on July 3, 1964, at the Wayne Thornton vs. Eddie Cotton fight, which took place in the Garden. He was in the company of shady Las Vegas gaming figure Ash Resnick.

I tried to reach out to Joe and Resnick would not let

me. I called out to Joe and said, "Please, Joe, I won't see you again." He turned around and came over to me despite the other man's objections. He shook my hand and let me give him a hard hug, which made him smile. While he signed an autograph for me, I told him I was a lightweight fighter. He said, "Chappie was a lightweight, too, and he could lick anybody. Good weight. Take care, champ." He left and I was on cloud nine.

I had a wonderful time with Tyson, thanks to him being so kind to me and my son when I was chosen to do an exclusive interview with him on stage at a 2015 VIP dinner with proceeds being donated to St. Jude's Children's Hospital. He's got the greatest sense of humor ever and is super intelligent.

He knew I had refereed many of his opponents – Holyfield twice, Green, Stewart, Savarese and Ruddock.

He ended the night with a big hug for me and my son Brett.

What garners my respect for Mike the most is his reverence for and knowledge of all the great fighters in all weight classes before him. He studied them all on film with D'Amato and Jacobs.

A prime Joe Louis gets prepped for sparring by legendary longtime trainer Jack "Chappie" Blackburn.

This is the way I see this rematch going.

That's right, I said rematch.

PRE-FIGHT EVENTS

Jack "Chappie" Blackburn's world had been shattered six months earlier as he watched his pride and joy, Joe Louis, get destroyed in two rounds by Mike Tyson in Las Vegas. The worst of it was that the trainer blamed himself for being unprepared for Tyson and being set in his ways, believing that Joe could beat any style of fighter.

Chappie could see his methods needed a drastic change; old school was good school to him, but after the fight he knew that he had to take a real hard look at making

Mike Tyson was at his best when under the tutelage of acclaimed coach and Cus D'Amato disciple Kevin Rooney.

some changes.

Rose-tinted glasses were shattered all over the globe and the boxing world was still reeling, not only from the upset but the blitz of the attack that the Brown Bomber had almost no defense for.

Louis was floored in the first 30 seconds of the opening round. He made it up by the count of seven and was later floored again before the bell. Joe barely made it up by eight.

In the second round, Louis had not fully recovered and Tyson floored him again. When Joe arose at nine, the fight was stopped.

In his heart, Joe knew he had the power and skill to do the same to Tyson, but he never got the chance.

Joe and his whole team took it hard, and he felt humiliated and embarrassed. Tyson was gracious and no bad blood existed before or after that fight, but Joe was determined to get him back in the ring and redeem himself.

They had an iron-clad contract for a rematch, and Tyson wanted it in Madison Square Garden. The Louis team agreed.

In all his days, Chappie had never seen anyone hit as hard and as fast as Tyson on the night he took his beloved Joe down. Tyson's speed of foot while pivoting reminded him of Harry Greb, and the way he bullied Joe off-balance was something they had not believed possible.

He along with Joe had no fear of big punchers, nor tall and heavy fighters. They always had something for them and came out with a win. But this Mike Tyson guy had speed and power that were just overwhelming.

Max Baer was a wild-swinging, right-hand killer puncher who Joe got inside of and dismantled in a hot shootout with no problem. They had dealt with other one-shot right-hand punchers, like Tami Mauriello, Jersey Joe Walcott, Max Schmeling and Buddy Baer, who hit like a ton of bricks. The big left hooker Tony Galento was torn to shreds. Some staggered Joe, others knocked him down, but Joe got up and found a way to finish them all.

The elusive way Tyson moved his head was not a complete enigma

for them either, as Paulino Uzcudun and Arturo Godoy had posed some difficulty in their unorthodox styles and were straightened out with uppercuts, paving the way for Joe's left hook and right hand.

The problem, Blackburn felt, was wholly with Joe himself, and as a man who loved Joe dearly he vowed on everything holy to correct it immediately. They had 16 full weeks to prepare for the rematch.

Number one, he had to make Joe stronger and punch harder and faster than he ever had before.

Tyson was a muscular, ripped powerhouse with super speed in his hands and body movements. He must be doing something different in his weight training to come in so ripped and powerful without being muscle-bound.

Blackburn had the perfect fighting machine in Louis, but the Brown Bomber needed time to get his engine warmed up to throwing the dynamite he inherently possessed. This put Louis at a decided disadvantage against Tyson, an entirely new kind of fistic cyclone. Facing Tyson was like being attacked by a heavyweight version of Henry Armstrong with T.N.T. in both fists.

There was nothing about fighting, let alone boxing, that Blackburn did not know and hadn't experienced himself. He fought all the legends under the worst conditions imaginable, and they all respected him.

He needed to put more functional muscle on Joe without impeding his fluid punch delivery. He had to find new methods to strengthen his core, as Tyson had hurt him to the body.

Blackburn was firmly against training with weights. Instead, he had Joe swinging a 20-pound sledgehammer against a giant tire, chopping wood, and pushing a wheelbarrow full of rocks up a steep hill.

Others convinced him, though, that the use of higher reps with low to moderate weight would give Joe some of that much-needed muscle.

Once Chappie's plans were in print, there were immediate objections from every would-be armchair trainer in the world, along with Joe's management team. Joe could use weighted pulleys like Dempsey did, they insisted, but no other weight training. Chappie ignored them.

When Blackburn started watching training films of Tyson, he knew he had to add something to Joe's repertoire. Louis' ring success came from smooth, long, fluid muscle, and many felt it should not be tampered with.

Evander Holyfield was hired in secret to share some of his training methods with the Louis team. Blackburn and Mannie Seamon would handle all the boxing and strategy with no interference, but methods involving pad work and diet were added to Joe's camp by the Holyfield staff.

Within four weeks, Joe Louis was transformed into a ripped, functional, muscular fighter who had intensified his road work, sparring and all aspects of his training.

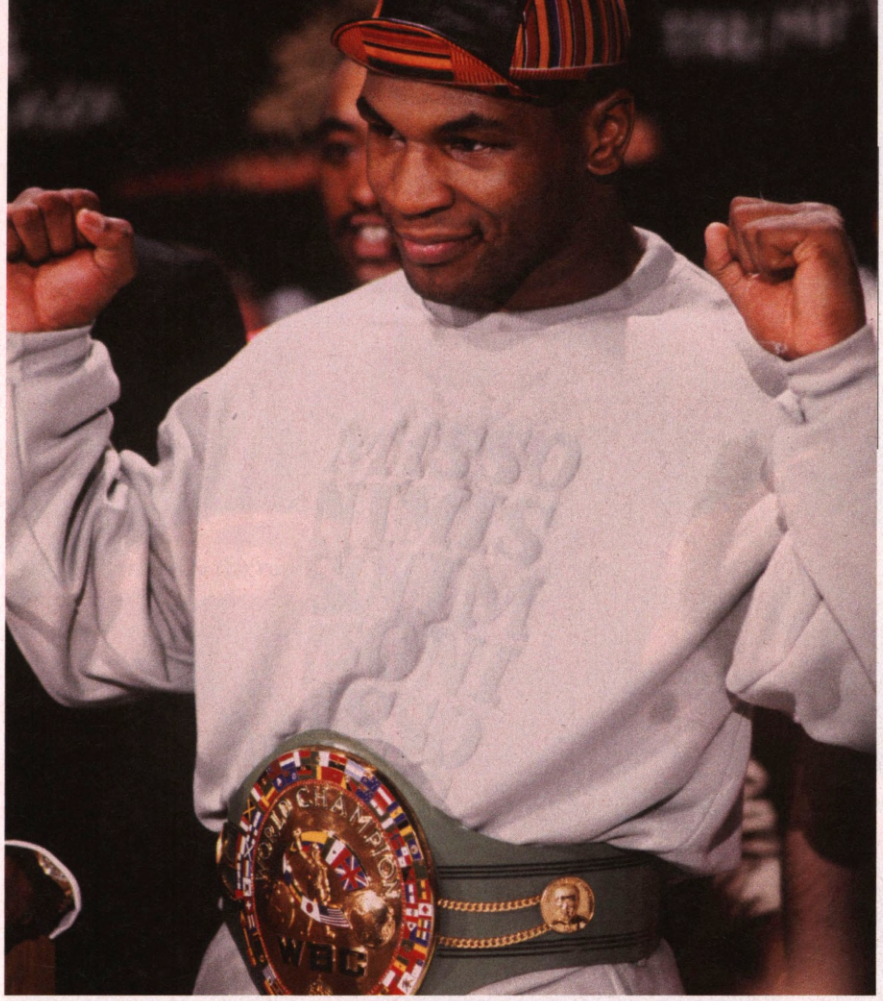
Both fighters agreed to VADA testing for the bout.

The entire world was waiting for this rematch.

The fight was selling itself and the Garden was sold out the first day. The pay-per-view sales went through the roof, and no one was concerned about the fighters' refusal to break training for any press tours. They were both locked away in preparation.

The press conferences went smoothly. Tyson respected and revered Joe Louis, and Joe was a gracious loser as well as a humble winner.

Louis won numerous honors during a legendary championship reign.



Tyson became the youngest heavyweight champ ever at 20.

They sat near each other and everyone enjoyed the publicity devoid of name-calling, cursing, shoving and the like. It was not needed.

When pressed for a comment, Tyson said, "If any of you out there have anything to say about this fight, no one better bad-mouth Joe Louis to me. I am showing up to fight with all I have, but win or lose, it is an honor to be in the ring with Joe."

When it was Louis' turn on the dais, he turned to look at Blackburn, who took the microphone and said, "All I am going to say is that on fight night you are going to see a new Joe Louis. We all respect Mike and I promise you it is going to be a great fight."

Then Joe Louis said, "I'm glad for this chance to get my title back and I am going to be in the best shape to give everyone a great fight show."

Both fighters refused a face-off but shook hands instead.

Joe's training camp was set up for him in Pompton Lakes, New Jersey, where a brand new facility was put up specially for this fight.

Blackburn, who was totally in charge, closed off the camp to everyone, just like Marciano used to do, which upset the press.

Tyson went back to the Catskills in New York, where Kevin Rooney, Cus D'Amato, Jimmy Jacobs and Ray Arcel were his constant companions and support team.

Muhammad Ali visited Tyson and was publicly grateful to Mike for getting Larry Holmes back for him. Ali respected Louis and loved to hang out on the boulder dedicated to Joe in his Deer Lake training camp, but publicly he said he believed Tyson would score a knockout once again.

Ali believed Louis was too flat-footed and slow to deal with Tyson.

After dinner one night about two weeks before the fight, Mike was alone in his room. Jimmy Jacobs came into the room with Cus. Cus said, "We are both very proud of you and have all the faith in the world in you. We just want to go over one thing with you if we can." Mike smiled and said, "Anything, sure."

"We want you to remember one thing about Joe Louis. He is deadly in rematches," D'Amato said. "Remember what he did to Walcott in the rematch?"

Mike replied, "That still is my favorite fight of all time. We all watched it together many times."

"Good, Mike. No matter what you did to Louis last time, remember that is still THE Joe Louis in there."

Mike looked at them very seriously and nodded his head in agreement.

Back in Pompton Lakes, there was a similar meeting of the minds.

Louis looked to be in the greatest shape he was ever in. He sported a dynamic six-pack for the first time in all his fights. His arms were rippling with muscle, as was his entire back. His legs were cut and like two pillars of steel from not only 10 miles a day of roadwork, sprints and running up hills but high-repetition squats, leg extensions, leg curls and leg presses.

He had been visited by Sonny Liston many times in camp and remained good pals with him. Liston brought his protégé George Foreman up there too. Both wanted to fight the winner of this match.

Blackburn came into the room to talk with Joe alone. "He's going to come at you the same way. All you have to do is what we worked on and be ready to bring something different for him this time, what we worked on."

Sam Langford came into the room. Joe lit up seeing him again. "Chappie tells me he's got a new Joe Louis he's going to turn loose on the world in two weeks," said Langford. "That's fine, Joe, but to me you had it in you all the time. Just get mean and get off with speed and power this time, and you'll be fine. You have what it takes, son. God bless you."

Both men had the best sparring, the best training, and now both camps were closed.

Tyson on his way to a KO win over Olympic champ Tyrell Biggs.

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CALM BEFORE THE STORM

In an unheard-of partnership, HBO, Showtime, ESPN and DAZN agree to co-produce a pay-per-view event that will livestream on a neutral "Tyson vs. Louis 2" app and be distributed through traditional cable and satellite systems. The sporting world is holding its breath and the Garden is pulsating with excitement.

The fighters are getting a 50/50 split of the purse even though Tyson won the first fight.

The arena's big screen shows Tyson's dressing room. Mike has his headphones on as Rooney tapes his hands. Jacobs and D'Amato are watching closely, as is the NYSAC's chief inspector, George Ward. Seamon watches the taping and then goes back to Louis.

When Rooney finishes up, Tyson starts to shadowbox furiously, the sweat popping off of him with every combination.

Jacobs gives Mike a kiss and a hug. D'Amato gives him an affectionate hug and says, "Remember, you are the greatest, up there with all the best. Whatever you do tonight, I will always love you and be proud of you."

In Louis' room, Arcel watches Blackburn doing the taping. Louis looks up at Ray and smiles and says, "You back again, Ray?" Arcel had been in the corner of many of Louis' victims in the ring. Arcel politely leaves when the taping is completed.

While Joe shadowboxes with no music, Blackburn lays down the law. "Listen, in the first round watch him like a cat, react like a cat and let him have a little. If he brings it harder, I showed you the openings he leaves, but you have to bend those legs, eyeball to eyeball level with him and thread a needle with your shots. Make everything hurt like a mule kicking downhill.

"We worked on those defensive pivots. He does that shit, you see him and raise him, but faster. Pivot with him and nail him hard. Keep both hands up high and damn it, don't drop them, and your jab will set up everything. Shotgun jabs all night long."

It's almost ring announcer David Diamante's time now.

THE FIGHT

The Garden is alive, packed with celebrities, champions and fans over the edge.

The lights dim and then burst forth in a dazzling light show that highlights Joe Louis coming down the aisle to the ring. There is no ring walk music, all business.

He is sandwiched between Liston and Foreman with Blackburn leading the way, Seamon and Charley Goldman in tow.

Blackburn holds the ropes and Joe climbs into the ring and gives a big smile to the crowd with an upraised glove. The deadpan look is gone.

To say the crowd is going insane is an understatement. All the old-school fans who worshipped Louis are there screaming his name with tearful joy and support for what he has meant to so many people.

Now a gravelly, growling voice followed by blaring beats fill the Garden. It is DMX's "It's Dark and Hell is Hot." Here comes Mike.

He is wedged between Ali and Sugar Ray Robinson.

Mike's gloves rest on the shoulders of Rooney, who is behind D'Amato and Jacobs. Arcel brings up the back.

It goes to Diamante.

"LADIES AND GENTLEMAN AND FIGHT FANS AROUND THE WORLD, ARE YOU READY? I SAID: ARE. YOU. READY!? THE FIGHT STARTS NOW!!!

"Twelve rounds of boxing scheduled for the undisputed IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO and Ring Magazine heavyweight championship of the world.

"The three judges scoring this bout are Harold Lederman, Tony Castellano and Frank Forbes. Your referee is Wayne Kelly.

"Introducing first, fighting out of the red corner wearing the purple Ben Lee trunks, he scaled 210¾ pounds; hailing from Detroit, Michigan, the beloved "Brown Bomber," JOE LOUIS! ... LOUIS!"

A full two minutes pass before deafening applause and shouting

Louis scored a dazzling 11th-round KO of the great Jersey Joe Walcott.

BETTMANN

finally die down.

"And his opponent, fighting out of the blue corner, wearing the all black trunks, he scaled 216 pounds, bang on. Fighting out of Brooklyn, New York, by way of Catskill, known as one of the hardest and most exciting punchers in boxing history, the reigning IBF, WBA, WBC, WBO and Ring Magazine heavyweight champion of the world, IRON MIKE TYSON! ... TYSON!"

The applause and support are equally resounding as the fans seem split down the middle.

Mike raises a glove in appreciation and now has his fight face on – it is serious and chilling.

They are called to the center of the ring. Mike stands with Rooney and Louis with Blackburn.

Mike is staring right at Joe, his eyes anxious and intense. Joe looks back and now his face is deadpan again; it's impossible to read what is behind his eyes. This happens quickly. It's clear the way they both looked away was out of respect for one another, but there was a distinct impression in the moment they locked eyes that this fight could go either way.

In the middle of the ring, Kelly speaks: "You've been given the rules of the New York State Athletic Commission. No intentional fouls will be tolerated. Protect yourself at all times and obey my commands at all times. Let's go to work."

Both fighters touch gloves and return to their corners.

Blackburn removes Louis' purple robe and for the first time the crowd sees his physique, which elicits a collective gasp. His arms, shoulders, legs and back are rippling with muscle.

FIRST ROUND

Tyson storms out, legs bent in a semi-crouch, moving his head side to side, working his way inside. Louis, taller at 6-foot-1, bends his legs to be eye-level with his squat adversary and lands a shotgun jab, which jars Tyson for a moment.

A rampaging Tyson iced Michael Spinks in 91 seconds.

Louis pivots out. Tyson, equally fast of foot, stays with him. The crowd screams as Tyson opens up with vicious body shots.

He is met with a pair of one-twos thrown straight to the face. The fast four-punch combination stuns and rocks Tyson back on his heels. However, Tyson regains his balance and comes right back inside in an attempt to land his pet combination – the double right uppercut to the body and head – he finds the body but misses badly with the head shot.

Louis wins the round, 10-9.

ROUND 2

Tyson comes out the same way, with bad intentions, trying to bull Louis onto his back foot. But Louis' footwork is keeping him a good half step away from Tyson, and he is using his longer reach to keep a hard jab in Mike's face. The left stick disrupts Tyson's rhythm and is starting to bruise his face.

But Tyson walks through it all and lands a crunching right hand to the side of Louis' jaw – the same punch he dropped Golota with. Joe takes a knee, raising the entire Garden to its feet at once.

Kelly sends Tyson to a neutral corner and picks up the count at four. Louis is up. He follows the command to take a step forward and to the side, and his gloves are wiped. Tyson is waved in. He starts raining bombs on Louis, who unbelievably is not moving away but returning fire like he did with Max Baer.

Louis and Tyson keep the crowd on its feet and Joe is now hurting Mike with sizzling combinations. Tyson is trying to pivot out to get an angle on Joe but Louis stays with him and drives Mike back with a

right uppercut, left hook, right hand, which causes Tyson to sag. Three more left hooks in a row drop Mike hard onto the seat of his pants. His right eye is bleeding. Louis runs to the neutral corner.

Mike is up at seven and says he is OK after stepping forward and to the side, as per Kelly's instructions. The bell rings and the ref follows Mike to the corner, takes a peek at him and backs off.

Score: Knockdown trade-off with Louis dominating.

10-9 Louis.

In the corner, Rooney implores Mike, "Watch out for his right hand! He's working his way up to dropping that right hand in on you; he's setting you up for that right hand that did Schmeling in!

"Don't let him get that off. Smother his right hand, damn it!! Your eye is OK. You're going to stop him, Mike. Get off first, keep hurting him and keep moving your head when you trade with him."

The crowd is still roaring. This is more intense than Ali-Frazier 1 now.

Rounds 3-10 become a battle of attrition with Mike trying to land flush on Louis, but Louis' jab is taking its toll on Mike's face. Each round has vicious exchanges that have turned the Garden into bedlam. No knockdowns have been scored since the second round.

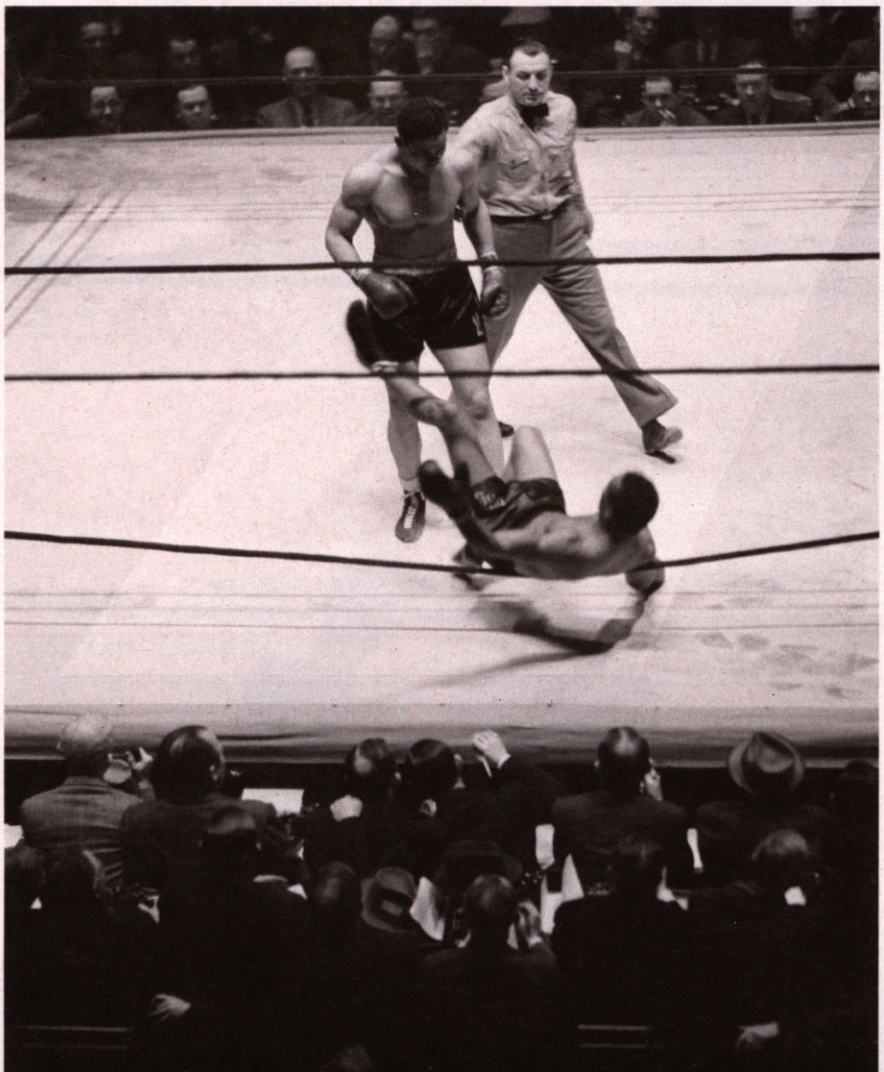
Three of the judges have scored rounds 3-8 for Louis, 10-9, but scored round 10 for Tyson, 10-9, as he came on stronger and landed better than before.

Between rounds in Tyson's corner, Cus is pleading with Mike to use his jab more to set up his power shots. Rooney keeps telling him he will wear down Louis with body shots and drop Joe's guard. Tyson's face is very swollen and the cut has become a serious factor.

Rooney tells Mike, "Get him now!" Arcel, who has been quiet while working on Mike's cut, warns Rooney and Mike: "Be very, very careful now. I'm the guy who ought to know."

Louis' corner is just as intense. Blackburn looks into Joe's eyes with deadly finality. "Let him have it all now, Joe. Let's get back what he took from us."

Louis looks down at ringside, sees Jersey Joe Walcott looking up at him and allows himself a small smile as Chappie's words echo in his ear. Joe thinks of how bad he felt when Tyson stopped him before; he was more embarrassed than he was with Schmeling.



A merciless Louis stopped John Henry Lewis in a single round.

ROUND 11

Louis is off his stool first. Instead of waiting for Tyson's rush, he goes right at him. Tyson is startled but fights back bravely with all he has. The crowd, the corners, the commentators are in a frenzy as Louis rains punches around Tyson's high guard. Eight punches – lefts and rights – land like explosions of leather on both sides of Tyson's face, around the jawline and temples.

Tyson starts to sink and is met with a blazing short right uppercut, left hook, right hand thudding combo. Tyson collapses to the canvas.

Kelly waves it off without a count and the Garden goes berserk.

When the smoke clears and Louis is declared the undisputed heavyweight champion again, Tyson – like the immortal champion he is – walks over to Joe, puts his arm around him, kisses him on the cheek and says, "We're even now, Joe. You're still my hero, but I want a rematch like I gave you."

Joe says, "That's a promise, Mike. I will always be your friend."

THE LONG COUNT:

When Gene Tunney upset Jack Dempsey in front of more than 120,000 at Philadelphia's Sesquicentennial Stadium in 1926, the heavyweight title bout set a record with its $1.9 million gate. Their rematch, at Soldier Field in Chicago on Sept. 22, 1927, smashed that record by grossing $2.8 million, but the result was the same; Tunney won a 10-round decision. However, the victory came with controversy, as Tunney received a slow 10-count from referee Dave Barry after being knocked down in Round 7. Dempsey was slow to go to a neutral corner after scoring the knockdown (a relatively new rule at the time), delaying Barry's count and giving Tunney extra time to recover.

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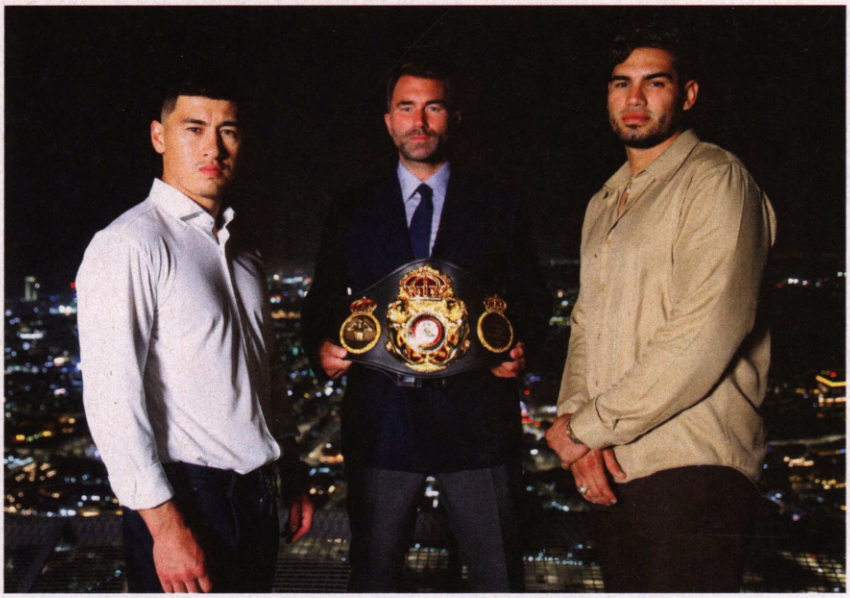

Dmitry Bivol (left) will defend his WBA 175-pound title against Mexico's Gilberto Ramirez on November 5 in Abu Dhabi.

OCTOBER

OCT. 29 – Katie Taylor vs. Karen Carbajal, lightweights (for Taylor's undisputed championship), London (DAZN).
OCT. 29 – Joseph Diaz Jr. vs. William Zepeda, lightweights, San Diego (DAZN).
OCT. 29 – Vasiliy Lomachenko vs. Jamaine Ortiz, lightweights, New York (ESPN+).

NOVEMBER

NOV. 1 – Hiroto Kyoguchi vs. Kenshiro Teraji, junior flyweights (for Kyoguchi's Ring/WBA and Teraji's WBC titles), Saitama, Japan (ESPN+). Also, Jonathan Gonzalez vs. Shokichi Iwata, junior flyweights (for Gonzalez's WBO title).
NOV. 5 – Dmitry Bivol vs. Gilberto Ramirez, light heavyweights (for Bivol's WBA title), Abu Dhabi (DAZN). Also, Chantelle Cameron vs. Jessica McCaskill, junior welterweights (for Cameron's Ring/IBF/WBC titles).
NOV. 11 – Sunny Edwards vs. Felix Alvarado, flyweights (for Edwards' IBF title), Sheffield, England.
NOV. 11 – Natasha Jonas vs. Marie-Eve Dicaire, junior middleweights (for vacant Ring, Jonas' WBC/WBO and Dicaire's IBF titles), Manchester, England. (DAZN)
NOV. 11 – Zhanibek Alimkhanuly vs. Denzel Bentley, middleweights (for Alimkhanuly's WBO title), Las Vegas (ESPN+). Also, Seniesa Estrada vs. Jazmin Gala Vallarino, strawweights (for Estrada's WBA title).

DECEMBER

DEC. 1 – Kim Clavel vs. Jessica Nery, junior flyweights (for Clavel's WBC and Nery's WBA titles), Laval, Canada.
DEC. 3 – Juan Francisco Estrada vs. Roman Gonzalez, junior bantamweights (for Estrada's Ring championship), Glendale, Arizona. (DAZN). Also, Julio Cesar Martinez vs. McWilliams Arroyo, flyweights (for Martinez's WBC title).
DEC. 10 – Josh Warrington vs. Luis Alberto Lopez, featherweights (for Warrington's IBF title), Leeds, England (DAZN).

JANUARY 2023

JAN. 28 – Jermell Charlo vs. Tim Tszyu, junior middleweights (for Charlo's undisputed championship), location TBA.

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